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THE AUTOMOBILE WORKERS in Detroit have at last decided to meet the wage-cutting policy of the manufacturers by calling a series of strikes. At first glance it would appear foolhardy for labor to attempt to use this weapon at a time when so many workers are unemployed and in need, but the Auto Workers' Union apparently has organized its campaign with more than ordinary skill. It struck at the very heart of the motor industry by calling out the mechanics in the body plants—workers who are relatively few in number and can be organized quickly and easily. Without a continuous supply of bodies the larger factories must close down. At the time of going to press this strategy had tied up more than half of the industry in Detroit, the Ford plants being completely shut down. Though the strikers did not number more than 6,000, probably as many as 100,000 workers were idle as a result of the walkout. Henry Ford's charge that the strike in the Briggs plant, which makes bodies for his company, was a part of a bankers' conspiracy to ruin him seems to us wholly incredible. The Auto Workers' Union has for months been preparing for this test of strength. It is no secret that the union has been led by Communist Party members, though in the present strike the leadership seems to have been shared by members of other radical and labor groups. The Communists had already won two or three minor strikes before this latest walkout. If the Auto Workers' Union wins the strike at the Briggs plant, its victory is likely to have important consequences throughout the country. For the indications are multiplying that American workers have about reached the end of their patience.

THE BRITISH REPLY to the Roosevelt-Hoover invitation to discuss the war debts is, on the surface, a disappointing one, particularly its final paragraph. That paragraph was no doubt partly inspired by a desire to reassure British opinion at home that debt reduction would be obtained without costly concessions. Apart from this, the paragraph admits of a dual interpretation. It is obvious that no *final* "decisions on matters which constitute the subject of the approaching world economic conference and which affect other states" can be reached "before discussions take place at that conference between all the states represented there." From this standpoint the British note states a simple fact. There is no reason, however, why tentative and provisional agreements between the two countries cannot be reached before the general conference; nor should we assume that the British reply bars them. So far as a quid pro quo for debt reduction is concerned, the question is more complicated. A year ago a promise of reduction would have had a high trading value. Our irreconcilables and last-red-centers refused to take advantage of it. Given the new frame of mind to which we have driven our debtors, this trading value now amounts to very little. We want tariff reductions on the part of Great Britain and her dominions, but it is even more necessary that we grant them reciprocal tariff rates. For if the British Empire opens its markets to our goods while we refuse to open our markets to Empire products, then we can only sell goods to the Empire by resuming again our old game of selling on credit, that is, of making more foreign loans which will never be repaid.

INSTEAD of any move to reduce our tariff, however, there is a widespread sentiment in the lame-duck Congress and in the repudiated Administration in favor of raising it even farther. A bill has been introduced to levy a "compensating tariff" with adjustable rates to be used against countries whose currencies are depreciated more than 5 per cent from gold parity. Such a tariff would be certain to discriminate against those countries unduly. For all external currency depreciation there is always some compensating internal rise of prices and production costs, and this compensating rise is greatest in the particular articles which enter into foreign trade. It is ridiculous to ascribe our ills to a "flood of imports" when our total imports last year amounted in value to only $1,323,000,000, compared with $2,090,000,000 in 1931, $3,060,000,000 in 1930, and $4,400,000,000 in 1929. Imports from low-exchange countries have declined as have imports from all others. In the eleven months ending in November, 1932, imports from the United Kingdom amounted to $70,000,000, compared with $126,000,000 the year before; in the same period imports from Japan amounted to $122,000,000, compared with $187,000,-

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000 the year before. Moreover, the drop of almost 40 per cent in commodity prices has meant an automatic rise in the burden of all specific tariff rates, which cover more of our imports than do ad valorem tariff rates.

THE DEPRESSION, like Scripture, can be cited by almost any Congressman in defense of any pet piece of extravagance. When a majority in the House of Representatives reinserted an appropriation of two and one-half million dollars to maintain the citizens' military training camps at full blast, the unemployment argument was movingly invoked. Congressman Barbour of California thought that in "this year of all years" something should be done "for the young men who have no work and many of whom have no homes." Candidates for the training camps are doubtless not profitably employed—being chiefly boys just out of high school. Most of them have never been at work. They scarcely fit into the picture of the 12,000,000 former wage-earners who are in need of assistance. Giving the boys a month's drill in snappy uniforms at Uncle Sam's expense would be both costly and ridiculous as a gesture of "relief." However sincerely advanced, this type of argument is mere camouflage, either of a national-defense complex or, more important, of the Congressman's individual pork barrel. The existence of a citizens' military training camp in a community means local purchases. A Congressman who permits abolition of a camp without laying an oratorical barrage risks the antagonism of the merchant princelings in his home town. When the real emergency is on the domestic economic front, it would seem obvious that true patriotism lies with the Congressional minority who have been seeking to eliminate these useless expenditures.

CONGRESSMEN eagerly searching every cranny for additional sources of tax revenues reacted none too favorably to the Treasury Department's income-tax refunds of $80,000,000 for the past fiscal year. These included a refund of nearly $3,000,000 to the United Fruit Company and four others exceeding $1,000,000 to such corporations as the National Aniline and Chemical Company, the Reading Company, and the Botany Worsted Mills. The Aluminum Company of America got $91,495, and its owners, Andrew W. Mellon and his brother, R. B. Mellon, also received personal refunds. It is clear that despite eleven years in office the former Secretary of the Treasury has never quite mastered the intricacy of an income-tax return. Former Postmaster-General Frank H. Hitchcock, long an active wire-puller behind the Republican scenes, and J. Henry Roraback, utility magnate and Republican national committeeman from Connecticut, also received refunds. The Senate thereupon provided for Congressional scrutiny of all refunds over $5,000; the House raised the limit to $20,000. But President Hoover vetoed the bill on the ground that it was unconstitutional, attaching an opinion by Attorney-General Mitchell that the proviso constituted an encroachment of the legislative branch upon the executive. The mere layman will be more apt to conclude that the reverse process has taken place and that it is the legislative power which has been trespassed upon by the executive. The Constitution gives to Congress the sole power to levy and collect taxes. Obviously Congress should have the right to know and pass upon the reasons for making tax refunds.

THE IRISH REPUBLICANS were the real victors in the elections of January 24. What they failed to achieve through successive rebellions they now seem likely to accomplish through the more orderly processes of democracy. It is not that Eamon de Valera is likely to proclaim a republic immediately on the strength of his party's surprising success. He is too much of a politician to make such a mistake. During the campaign he frankly declared that the people of Ireland must be "at liberty to determine freely their own governmental institutions and the extent of their cooperation with Great Britain in matters of agreed concern." This is the position he has taken for years, and he has said that this goal can be reached only by establishing an independent Irish republic. England's attempt to check De Valera by raising the tariff rates on imports from the Irish Free State has hurt the Irish people, especially the farmers, but despite the growing economic distress De Valera refused to deviate in the slightest degree from his program. That he had the support of the people is now abundantly clear. Even his chief opponent, William T. Cosgrave, appreciated the strength of the nationalist sentiment and sought to cater to it by making extravagant promises. But the temporary nature of these promises revealed that Cosgrave was simply following an opportunist course for the purpose of catching votes. Having obtained a majority, so that he need no longer depend even upon his allies in the Labor Party, De Valera can now proceed with his patient and considered efforts to free Ireland from the last vestige of English control.

NATIVES IN KENYA owning land in the recently discovered gold fields are to lose their homes and farms without compensation. That is the fact, although it is concealed beneath heaps of rubbish in the form of ordinances and amendments to ordinances and memoranda and proposals by the Colonial Secretary. Basing its comment on early dispatches from Kenya, *The Nation* reported some weeks ago that dispossessed natives were to be compensated by other lands—lands without gold! The Native Land Trust Ordinance, adopted in 1930, provided for such compensation. Adopted at a time of general unrest and apprehension in the native population, after white settlers had gradually usurped their best land, the ordinance guaranteed to the natives permanent possession of the reserves left to them. It also promised that in case of necessary alienation—for public purposes only and after full inquiry—the owner should be paid in land of equal area and if possible of equal value. These guaranties have now been cynically abandoned. The Kenya Legislative Council has opened the country in question—highly cultivated, overcrowded farm country—to a multiplying horde of prospectors who are permitted to seize the land, dig out the gold, and tear down the native huts. The owner of land, meanwhile, continues theoretically to be the owner. But his farm is in the hands of white outsiders who hold it on renewable leases which may run as long as twenty-one years. He receives no compensation; he gets no gold. He is advised merely to move over to some neighbor's land and wait for his own to be turned back at some indefinite time in the future. Naturally the natives are fearful, and angry. A situation which was tense when the Land Trust Ordinance was passed is made doubly dangerous. By law, the minerals are the property of the state. It would seem obvious sense, even from the point of view of enlightened

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imperialism, to develop these fields under government control with an honest observance of the rights explicitly granted the natives. Only in this way can certain conflict between blacks and whites be avoided, and the remnants of British honor in East Africa be retrieved.

THE POLITICAL CRISIS that brought down the Paul-Boncour Cabinet in France probably cannot be finally resolved by ordinary political methods. It has already been suggested in dispatches from Paris that while another stop-gap government may succeed that of Paul-Boncour, eventually a non-party government will have to be formed. The Radical Socialists led by Edouard Herriot have the largest representation in the Chamber of Deputies. Therefore they constitute the logical nucleus of any party government. But to form a majority they must bargain either with the center parties on the right or with the Socialists on the left. Both Herriot and Paul-Boncour tried working with the Socialists, and both fell because at critical moments the Socialists withdrew their support. Numerically it is possible to arrange a coalition between the Radical Socialists and the parties of the center, but actually such groups as the Popular Democrats and the Center Republicans are much farther removed in a political sense from the Radical Socialists than is the Socialist Party. The French have in the past remained patient through seemingly endless Cabinet crises. On the other hand, there are significant indications of popular dissatisfaction with the financial policies of the Radical Socialists which may finally crystallize in a demand for a government of "national concentration" similar to the National Union which Raymond Poincaré headed in 1926. The French people remember that Poincaré stabilized the franc in that year after Herriot and the Radical Socialists had failed. Faced with another financial crisis, they are being persuaded, with the help of the press, that the Poincaré methods may have to be resorted to again.

INNUMERABLE LITERARY STUDENTS suffered a real pang when they read the news of Professor Saintsbury's death. Most, of course, knew him only through his many books, but he was that very rare thing, a scholar who managed somehow to convey the flavor of a vivid personality even through the opaque medium of a textbook. Few men of any time had read so much or so enthusiastically. The forgotten books of the past were almost as familiar to him as the surviving classics, and, indeed, he once declared that no book was uninteresting if only the reader brought a proper equipment with him. Scholars of the specializing type sometimes accused him of inaccuracies which only the most special specialist could note, and he wrote in a lumbering style full of parentheses and side remarks too numerous to be fitted easily into any sentence, however long. But even that style suggested the amiable though crotchety old Tory he was.

IT IS A SORRY COMMENTARY on the state of civilization in America that a fair judicial opinion on any case involving a Negro is so rare as to merit special mention. But that fact does not detract from the credit due to Mr. Justice Maxey of the Supreme Court of Pennsylvania for his admirable decision granting a new trial to William Brown. In February last the body of Dorothy Lutz, eight years old, was found in an empty house in Philadelphia. A few days later William Brown, a mulatto, sixteen years old, was taken into custody. He was indicted for murder on the basis of circumstantial evidence and a signed confession. At the trial the chief issue was whether the confession had been made voluntarily or under duress. The tale of torture related by Willie Brown was not new—it included curses, a hot room, threats of "a mob," blackjacks, hunger, and thirst. The decision was not new either. The police were given a clean bill and Willie Brown was sentenced to lose his life. The claim for a new trial was based on excerpts from the charge to the jury of the presiding judge, Harry S. McDevitt. One of these, with Justice Maxey's reply, follows:

> JUDGE MCDEVITT: In the procuring of confessions sometimes nicety of details must be governed by the necessity of circumstances. Circumstances create conditions that justify methods that are employed.
>
> JUSTICE MAXEY: This is error. No principle of the law is better settled than that confessions secured by brutality or by any other form of duress are vitiated.

These two quotations are typical both of the palpable bias of the judge's charge and the "genuine, tender, and reverent solicitude for the dignity and majesty of the law" which distinguishes the overruling opinion.

THERE ARE VERY REAL REASONS for regretting that the Group Theater has ceased its activities for the season and, quite possibly, forever. Most of the other non-commercial theatrical enterprises in New York are excessively unimportant and the Group was the only one which promised to play the role filled from about 1914 to 1925 by such organizations as the Washington Square Players, the Provincetown Players, and the Neighborhood Playhouse. Now that it is gone there is no vigorous organization definitely committed to experiment. The immediate reason for its collapse was the prompt failure of its most recent production, "Big Night," which was not only disliked by most of the critics except *The Nation's* own, but was damned with unusual and not wholly understandable ferocity. Whatever may be thought of that production, however, it can hardly be denied that the Group's record is an extremely honorable one. Several years ago it contributed "Red Rust," last year "The House of Connelly," and this year "Success Story." Each would have been definitely missed from any list of the plays of the year.

AMONG THE DISREGARDED VICTIMS of the depression are some hundreds of lions, tigers, elephants, and other wild animals which were dragged from their native forests to be shut up in municipal or circus zoos that are now no longer willing to feed them. They can't be sold because no one will buy them, and the city of Spokane, for example, has decided simply to slaughter a collection which includes polar bears, buffaloes, and grizzlies. Cincinnati has a better plan, which consists in setting school children the task of selling tickets of admission to the Zoo, but almost any solution is better than that adopted by a showman who sold two lions to a St. Louis eccentric who used them to stage a lion hunt for his own amusement. The spectacle of this man vainly attempting to make the tame beasts leave their cage in order that he might imagine himself a mighty hunter as he shot at them furnished one of the most revolting of the minor grotesqueries of our civilization.

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Weak Knees and Strong Banks

SHALL we have pawnshops or real banks? That was the question put before Congress and the country by Senator Glass of Virginia in defending his banking-reform bill which has now been passed by the Senate. Eighty per cent of the 11,000 banks that have failed in recent years, he declared, have been institutions capitalized at less than $25,000 each, "pawnshops set up over the country, miscalled banks, that have toppled over like tenpins in an alley at every disturbance of business." Senator Glass might have phrased this question differently and so come closer to the heart of the problem. For the real quarrel lies between those who believe we ought to preserve our anarchic system lest by changing it we deliver ourselves into the hands of a few rich men, and those who favor a strong, centralized banking system under adequate public regulation or control. The first group holds that it would be dangerous to allow either Washington or Wall Street to encroach any further upon our tradition of economic freedom and individual initiative. The second is interested primarily in stable and efficient banking. The Glass bill takes an important though modest step in this direction.

Among the difficulties now threatening the American banking structure, two stand out. The first is that instead of one uniform banking system we have forty-nine conflicting and competing systems. In his article in *The Nation* of April 13, 1932, H. Parker Willis recommended "the transfer of power over banking legislation to the federal government" either by means of a constitutional amendment or by agreement between the States. "Without this step," Dr. Willis asserted, "we shall go on with the conflict between grades of government, with the attempt on the part of the States to tempt banks away from their federal charters, with the effort of national administrators to draw them back by laxity in law or in administration, with the craven fear on the part of the Federal Reserve system lest it lose members through uprightness of administration, and with other elements of profound weakness that must ultimately bring even more complete disorganization than that now existing." The Glass bill does not directly touch this important aspect of the general problem, though it seeks to strengthen the Federal Reserve system and thereby overcome some of the difficulties mentioned by Dr. Willis.

Secondly, there are too many banks in the United States, of which the vast majority are small, independent institutions which for the most part are undercapitalized. Under competent management they may survive in times of prosperity, but they fall very quickly in times of depression. When these houses close their doors by the hundreds and by the thousands, not only are the communities they serve deprived of their banking facilities and huge sums in deposits lost or tied up for indefinite periods, but the shock of such waves of bank failures disturbs business and finance throughout the country. A highly centralized system, such as may be found in England or Canada, could afford to absorb the smaller, independent institutions when they are in trouble. It is significant that despite the depression England and Canada have had very few bank failures. In the United States, on the other hand, we have had failures by the thousands. Here there is no bank or group of banks strong enough to take over the smaller houses and guarantee their deposits. And fear of the power of Wall Street thwarts every effort to strengthen or centralize our banking system.

It is probably true that the public is not prepared for the concentration of banking power in the hands of relatively few houses, especially since we have not yet had sufficient experience with regulatory methods to insure public control of banking that would be adequate to prevent abuse of power. The sensible approach to the problem is through the development of branch banking, leading naturally to centralization. At the same time, by meeting each new problem as it arose, a technique of governmental supervision could be developed. The Glass bill seeks to encourage precisely this sort of evolution. It lays down new rules for banking practice in the national field. It would also permit national banks to open and maintain branches in the States in which they are themselves located, "if such establishment and operation are at the same time expressly authorized to State banks by the law of the State in question." True, only nine States have such laws at present, but others are likely to adopt them in the near future.

It is, however, not sufficient merely to encourage branch banking. There must also be intelligent and expert supervision, and the government body charged with this task must be given punitive power to compel the bankers to abide by the rules and regulations adopted. The Glass bill is designed in part to prevent another stock-market explosion and to stabilize the national banking system generally by restricting Federal Reserve credit in order to keep it out of speculative channels, by compelling national banks to divorce themselves from their security affiliates, thereby preventing these banks from gambling in stock-exchange securities, and by controlling holding companies for bank stocks. But the bill would also broaden the supervisory and punitive powers of the Federal Reserve Board by granting to that body authority to remove officers and directors of member banks who in its judgment engage in unsound banking practices. That is an important step forward.

The weak-kneed position assumed by many of our Western and Southern politicians with regard to branch banking is altogether natural. It is true that the failure of the big bankers in the present crisis has been among the greatest of the tragedies attending the depression. But the people of the South and West should remember that their small local banks, being inherently weak, appear to be doomed in any event if the depression continues much longer. Would it not be better for these communities if the larger banks were permitted to take over the local institutions for the purpose of keeping them open and serving their communities? Obviously this would place tremendous power in the hands of relatively few banks. But with adequate public control, particularly with respect to the activities of individual bankers, this would constitute no great menace to our economic structure. Of course, if public control broke down, as it would do if the bankers were allowed to capture the Federal

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Reserve Board, there would be no alternative left except nationalization of the whole banking system. No one will seriously argue that it would be easier to nationalize our banks under the present relatively chaotic conditions than it would be if the banks were drawn together in a strong, centralized system. That is the direction in which we are moving. We have it within our power to decide whether the road toward a uniform and sound banking system is to be strewn with the wreckage of innumerable small, independent banks. The new system could as well be built upon strong branch banks operating in every community and serving the interests of the country as a whole.

Mr. Roosevelt Must Lead

FRANKLIN D. ROOSEVELT'S statesmanship will be tested immediately upon his taking office. Not since the Presidency of Abraham Lincoln has the need for effective leadership and prompt and vigorous action been more imperative. It may fairly be said that today's problems are more complex and difficult than those of 1861. So steadily has the economic crisis been aggravated that measures which conceivably might have checked the downward trend two years ago will no longer be adequate. The country faces the gravest crisis in its peace-time history.

Within a few hours after inauguration the nation should be able to gauge fairly well whether Norman Thomas's taunt that the political star of Franklin D. Roosevelt would begin to set on March 4 was justified. The selection of his Cabinet, for one thing, will be highly significant. If it is composed of great names—great in the dear departed past—it will indicate that Mr. Roosevelt's policies and program are to be merely a slightly warmed-over Republicanism. His major appointments will provide an acid test of his understanding that we are passing through, not a depression, but the end of an epoch. If, for instance, he appoints Miss Frances Perkins as Secretary of Labor, it will demonstrate that her superlative qualifications for that post outweigh political considerations, and that he has been strong enough to resist that type of pressure. If, on the other hand, he nominates Daniel J. Tobin, for many years president of the International Brotherhood of Teamsters, Chauffeurs, Stablemen, and Helpers, it will be evident that the same shortsighted and ineffective policies which have brought about the deterioration of the American Federation of Labor will shape the labor program of the Roosevelt Administration.

Similarly, the appointment of an Attorney-General with the public record and social viewpoint of Senator Thomas J. Walsh or Felix Frankfurter will serve notice that a few score corporation heads will no longer continue to be superior to law and government. A vigilant Attorney-General would have proceeded against Samuel Insull long before his flight to Greece. And there are "blue-sky" practices through which other utility magnates and financiers have robbed the public of millions, that cry aloud for prosecution, so that this plunder shall cease. The Progressives—who have borne the Republican label—should be represented in the Cabinet. It is they who, for a decade, have fought for a "new deal" for the American people. Philip F. La Follette, former governor of Wisconsin, or Bronson Cutting of New Mexico would greatly strengthen Mr. Roosevelt's Cabinet.

The utter futility that has marked not merely the present lame-duck session, but the relations of President and Congress for the four years of the Hoover Administration should be a warning to Mr. Roosevelt that he must never relinquish the tiller. His chances of obtaining and preserving Congressional party harmony—essential for the prompt adoption of relief measures—depend largely on the vigor of his leadership, the definiteness of his program, and the speed with which he inaugurates it. The very gravity of the crisis and the need for action are factors in his favor, if only he will take advantage of them.

Measures which obviously require immediate action are settlement of the war debts, downward revision of tariffs, arms reduction, the recognition of Russia, banking reform, farm and unemployment relief, and necessary government economies. Reemployment is, of course, the overshadowing need. The often proposed several-billion-dollar bond issue for direct relief or for indirect relief through public works, slum clearance, and so on may be a "nostrum" to the spokesmen of the vanished new era who want at all costs to avoid higher income taxes, but their own remedies have been flat failures. The character and direction of the financial relief they extracted from Mr. Hoover need to be fundamentally altered. More important than the bolstering of bankrupt railroad securities and the dumping of large sums of the people's money into insurance companies and banks (which continue to close) is the relief of the hungry and destitute and of farm and home owners, thousands of whom have already lost their properties. Further dispossessions, either because of inability to pay mortgage interest or taxes, must be stopped at once.

For nearly three and one-half years Mr. Hoover and the giants of finance and captains of industry have been in charge of national affairs. The resulting debacle has been complete. Their fiscal and economic policies have been ruinous. The life of the country is at low ebb. Mr. Roosevelt need not fear to try new leaders and new ideas, and to venture boldly into untrodden paths.

Hitler in Power

ADOLF HITLER has at last reached his goal. His appointment as Chancellor of Germany is for him a supreme personal triumph. But does his ascendancy mean that the type of fascism he represents is to rule unchecked? Are the heads of the "republican traitors" of 1918 now to "roll in the sand," as he boasted at the famous Leipzig trial a few years ago? It seems unlikely. President von Hindenburg has conferred upon Hitler the honor of the chancellorship but he has taken pains to prevent any real power from slipping into the hands of the National Socialist leader.

Apart from the personal satisfaction Hitler may get out of the chancellorship, the change in the government brought only one distinct gain to the National Socialists. Hermann Göring, speaker of the Reichstag, was placed in charge of the Prussian Ministry of the Interior, an appointment which gives the Nazis control over the huge and important Prus-

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sian police force of 150,000 men. And even this concession was hedged with numerous checks. Former Chancellor von Papen, who has remained on the most intimate terms with President von Hindenburg, was not only appointed Vice-Chancellor, but was also given the post of Federal Commissioner for Prussia. Thus Göring will be responsible to Von Papen, who is opposed to the use of the Prussian police for political purposes. The Nazis also sought control of the Reichswehr, but Hindenburg named one of his own advisers, General Werner von Blomberg, to the Ministry of Defense, which controls the army and is charged with maintaining general public order.

It appears improbable that the Nazis will be able to carry out any of their major economic or social policies under the new arrangement. Baron von Neurath retains the Foreign Affairs portfolio, which makes it certain that there will be no flat repudiation of the Versailles treaty or of other commitments in the foreign field. Count Schwerin von Krosigk, who was reappointed Minister of Finance, is not only conservative and therefore opposed to experimentation of the sort that the National Socialists advocate, but he has customarily acted as spokesman for the big Berlin banks which the Nazis have always denounced. Other members of the new Cabinet, who are no less nationalistic than Hitler but are hostile to his program and tactics, include Alfred Hugenberg, the publisher, and Franz Seldte, head of the Stahlhelm. Hugenberg was appointed Minister of Commerce and Agriculture, and Seldte Minister of Labor.

In the excitement attending the advent of a Hitler Government the fall of General von Schleicher seems almost to have been overlooked. Von Schleicher was the "man of mystery," popularly considered to be adept in backstairs intrigue. He is said to have boasted on one occasion that when he came into power he would remain Chancellor for twenty years. Yet he lasted only fifty-seven days. The cause of the sudden fall has not been satisfactorily explained, but it appears that in Franz von Papen he met his master at the game of political intrigue. Ever since Von Papen was compelled to resign from the chancellorship last November, he has been busy pulling wires. He seems finally to have accomplished his end by coming to terms with Hitler and pulling down Von Schleicher. There is little doubt that Von Papen, with Hindenburg supporting him, will be the real head of the Cabinet.

If the new government is tolerated by the Center Party it may survive for months, perhaps much longer. If the Centrists turn against it, it may fall at once, for no government depending on a parliamentary majority can be formed without their support. Of course, Hitler and Von Papen may choose to dispense with the Reichstag altogether, precisely as Von Schleicher intended to do, but it is more than probable that Hindenburg would not consent to such a frank violation of the constitution. Even if the new government should remain in office, with or without Catholic support, Hitler seems destined to lose much of his following unless he can prevail upon his colleagues to carry out some of his blood-and-thunder promises. That they will do so is entirely out of the question. A majority of them would be only too happy to see the National Socialist movement destroyed, or at least working in harness with the other forces of reaction, but on their terms, not Hitler's.

Back to the Land

IN a recent issue of the *Countryman,* a little English magazine bound in grass-green covers, appears an imaginary conversation between two Londoners. "At twenty," says the first, "you left the farm to come to the city. And for forty years you slave your inside out—for what?" "To make enough," replies the other, "to live in the country."

The movement to the city began no doubt when the second house in the world was built alongside the first; and the movement back to the land began soon afterward when one of the inhabitants of a primeval mud village began to feel crowded. Gregariousness and solitude, like war and peace, are one pair of the opposites of men's desire. History rewritten in terms of these two movements would be more amusing than economic determinism and not altogether fallacious. In this country, as everybody knows, the rush to the cities began when the last frontier was reached. We suspect that like United States Steel common it reached its highest point in 1929. The city, too, attained its highest development in the "new era." To men nourished on 1,000 per cent profits derived from an initial dollar borrowed from a bank and invested on margin, the slow increase of nature was unbelievably crude, an utter denial of progress. So they built themselves skyscrapers and hid the offending ground that lies beneath every city with a solid mass of brick and stone to proclaim the impregnability of man's handiwork.

The great wave of inflation, which reached its high-water mark in New York City, has already receded to the lower floors of numerous skyscrapers. Ten thousand empty offices high above the street are lighted at night only by the reflection from some passing airplane, and even at the street level chasms yawn where once the latest fashions or a solvent bank flourished.

Meanwhile the farm and the farmer rise in public esteem. Formerly anyone who stayed in the country when he could get a job in a factory deserved to starve. Now important people are discovering that the farmer must somehow be saved, and former skilled mechanics, when they are able to, are bartering their skill for the farmer's food. The intellectual return to the land began some years ago. From one end of the country to the other in sundry quiet places will be found bored or tired city intellectuals "annihilating all that's made to a green thought in a green shade."

We await the census of 1940, and we expect that it will show a movement back to the land. But we shall not look upon the news as final or expect the cities to fall into decay. By the time Russia completes its movement to the city and starts back again we shall have begun another urban inflation. We have just rediscovered certain lines by Thomas Randolph, from an ode to Master Anthony Stafford to hasten Him into the Country.

Come, spur away
I have no patience for a longer stay,
But must go down
And leave the chargeable noise of this great town
* * * * *
'Tis time that I grow wise, when all the world goes mad.

These lines were written before 1635, yet London persists.

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Issues and Men

The Army and Navy Forever

WHY is it that the army and navy appropriations have become so sacrosanct in Washington? It is true that there have been some pay cuts in both the army and the navy, but the vast total of the outlay for army and navy remains untouched. It is as if a curtain of inviolability had been thrown around them, or as if there were evidences that the country was in danger. The Navy League representatives, of course, have been to Franklin Roosevelt to show him how rapidly we are dropping to third —or is it fifth?—place, while the Chief of Staff has solemnly informed the country that in the matter of land armaments we stand in seventeenth place. Some of the vital services of the government, such as education, are being sharply curtailed. Why is it that there is such hesitation about reducing the army or navy? The Appropriations Committee of the House of Representatives has reduced the new army bill by only $60,000,000. Nominally the cut is $110,000,000, but $50,000,000 of this amount is accounted for by non-recurring emergency construction which is ending in the present fiscal year. The military side of the War Department's work is actually cut only $31,584,000. Even this reduction was at once attacked, particularly the bill's suspension for a year of the citizens' military training camps, which have thus far been attended by 377,000 young Americans eager to learn how to kill other human beings and to be supported while doing so. But the bill does not even move to reduce the number of officers in the regular army from 12,000 to 10,000, as last year's bill did, and it does not specify that as vacancies in the lowest grade of the corps of officers occur, there shall be no fresh appointments. Yet the army is dreadfully over-officered compared to the number of men it actually has in the ranks. It has many more colonels than can possibly command regiments, far more generals than ever before in our history, and the retired list is stuffed with many of the temporary officers of the World War.

Now is this necessary? Let us leave aside the fact that for more than one hundred years of our national existence we never had a regular army larger than 25,000 men and officers, and that during most of that time we had one of only 10,000. Let us not dwell upon the facts that we were solemnly assured that we had won the war to end war, and that we have signed the Pact of Paris forever outlawing war as an instrument of national policy. Let us look at the world as it is. What nation could possibly go to war with the United States today? Not Germany certainly, nor Russia, which is obviously willing to let Japan go as far as it likes in Manchuria rather than endanger the very existence of the Communist system by getting into a war. And surely not France. The wildest jingo never suggests that we shall go to war with France. Nor does anybody suggest that Mussolini's fleet is a menace to the United States. England? Well, there is certainly no danger of that in view of the critical condition of Britain's industry, the prostration of most of its basic industries, and the financial debacle of last year which made it abandon the gold standard—to say nothing of the historic friendship between the two countries and the pledges of eternal friendship we gave when we joined the Allies in 1917. There remains, then, only Japan, which would seem to have its hands full in Manchuria—Japan, whose adventures in China have made that nation so unpopular with the rest of the world that it could hardly expect anything but a united front against itself in the event of hostilities with a Western Power. But, we hear it said, is it not true that there exists an alliance between England and Japan, tacit, it is true, but none the less binding? Would not these two countries be glad to join forces against us?

Well, the answer is that 60 per cent of Japan's trade is with the United States and this would cease on a declaration of war; that the yen has steadily lost ground for the last two years; that nothing would so jeopardize the Japanese adventure in Manchuria and Jehol; and that it would be impossible for Japan to find the money necessary to finance a war with the United States. The first result for England of alliance with Japan would be the loss of India, which would certainly take the opportunity to throw off British control. The simple truth is that there is not a nation in financial condition to undertake a struggle with the United States, and certainly not one whose military officers and financial and economic experts could hold out the slightest hope of gaining anything whatever from war with the United States, whether that war should be successful or unsuccessful. Have we not learned the great lesson of the World War and its aftermath—that the victors are punished as much as the vanquished? But still the Congress acts as if we must not reduce the army by an officer or a man; as if we must not lay violent hands upon our obsolete battleships. And the militarists and navalists are crying out that if there are any reductions in the armed forces, the legions of the unemployed will only be increased. To this the answer is that the discharges could be gradual, and that if necessary it would be better and cheaper for the United States to give these men a bare living sustenance in civil life than to maintain them in barracks. Certainly if unnecessary pensions were cut off, there would be no difficulty in giving these discharged men a dole until such time as they were absorbed by the farm or by industry. As a matter of fact, there was more than one general in Washington last winter who admitted privately that the army would be much more efficient if it had several thousand fewer officers. Whether they were right or not there is today no sound reason why the army and navy appropriations should not be cut by several hundred millions of dollars, as a long step toward that disarmament for which even Senator Jim Watson of Indiana is apparently ready, now that he has introduced a bill for the United States to offer to the rest of the world a 50 per cent reduction in all armaments for a period of ten years.

Oswald Garrison Villard

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Machines and the Future

By ARCHIBALD MacLEISH

NOTHING about the human race is more curious than its passion for believing prophecies of doom—unless it be its passion for destroying the prophets. Any oracle who cares to foretell the end of a civilization can make the front pages from Bushire to Nome. But God must defend him if the details of his divination err.

Mr. Howard Scott, augur of the Technocrats, is the latest example. Like all successful prophets Mr. Scott appeared in a time of tribulation. Like all successful prophets Mr. Scott foretold woe. And like all successful prophets Mr. Scott was widely and resoundingly and hysterically believed. With the inevitable reaction, the inevitable repudiation, and the inevitable relapse. Indeed, Mr. Scott differs from his predecessors among the ancients in one characteristic only. The Roman prophet could not be discountenanced until the event. But Mr. Scott, because he appealed to the great American belief in scientific truth and therefore expressed his dooms in scientific terms supported by scientific findings, was subject to immediate check. And when the check was made, when the devout discovered that the ratio of 1932 electric-bulb production per man to 1914 electric-bulb production per man was 550 to 1 instead of 9,000 to 1, the black ink of rage ran from one end of the country to the other. The customers had been sold. The *facts* were otherwise. Mr. Scott was a fake prophet. And nothing was necessary to a proper cinematic ending for the whole affair but the repudiation of Mr. Scott by his own disciples. Which obligingly followed.

If no one were concerned in the result but Mr. Scott, the situation would be innocuous and amusing. Mr. Scott would have had his day in the sun and no one but himself to blame for the precipitancy which threw him into the newspapers before he had tested his statistics. Unfortunately, however, Mr. Scott is very far from being the only person concerned. For his name, in part because of his own egoism, and in part because of the fumbling of editors who knew no word to express the corpus of ideas with which Mr. Scott was dealing, has become identified and synonymous with one of the most pressing problems our civilization has to face. Technocracy, whether we like it or not, now stands by substitution for the whole body of social and economic questions posed by the mechanization of industry. And the neglect of Mr. Scott as an individual and of Technocracy as a school means the neglect of issues which we cannot afford to neglect. As the published remarks of the last two weeks abundantly prove. It is not alone left-wing intellectuals, recently converted from Professor Babbitt to Karl Marx and unable with decency to afford a second removal at this time, who have breathed audible sighs of relief over Mr. Scott's discomfiture. It is also the bankers and the episcopal bishops and the societies of engineers and the chambers of commerce and the Professor Fishers. Mr. Paul du Pont put the case neatly when, with unintended irony, he remarked that United States Steel at sixty would put an end to the whole discussion. It would. And these gentlemen hope to see the day.

The rest of us, however, do not. And for two reasons. Of which the lesser is the certainty that failure to deal with the problem now means a disaster—and a disaster beyond the profit of any revolutionary group—within this generation; and of which the greater is the conviction that the recognition of the technological trend and the acceptance of its significance offer the first ray of human hope since industrialism began. The Technocrats were journalistically clever but humanly obtuse when they made their cause a cause of fear. The real meaning of modern industrialism has no interpretation in terms of fear except for the banking class. For the rest of society it offers hope. Earlier in this century and throughout the latter half of the nineteenth century there was no hope in industrialism but escape. Poets turned aside from it. Philosophers transcended it. Even the Communists who plunged into it to the hair roots, accepting the human categories of economic class it imposed, worshiping the symbolic tractors it produced, and making a religion of the labor it compelled men to perform, were unable to find in industrialism a positive justification and were forced to express their Utopia in negatives—the *end* of capitalism, the *end* of exploitation, the *end* of injustice. But with the third decade of the present century the image changed. Industrialism turned another face. It became apparent that the goal of industrialism was not merely greater and greater production, more and more material, richer and richer bankers, but something quite different from these things. It became apparent that industrialism was moving toward a degree of mechanization in which fewer and fewer men need be, or indeed could be, employed. And that the result of that development must, of physical necessity, be a civilization in which all men would work less and enjoy more. For the alternative to such a choice was a state in which a half or a quarter of the adult population would be unemployed and carried as charity charges by the remainder of the population, and such an alternative was unthinkable. What political or social revolutions must intervene no man could say. But the probable and indicated outcome could be foreseen by any man who was familiar with the figures.

The statistical statement of that prognosis is the heart of Technocracy. And it is there, rather than on the pin's head of particular production figures, that the angels should be made to dance. Technocracy's brick and pig-iron figures may, and undoubtedly do, prove that the Technocrats are exceedingly careless engineers. But in the last analysis the important question is not whether a man can make 9,000 times or only 550 times as many light bulbs now as he could make in 1914, but whether it is or is not true that the mechanization of industry has reached the point where production can increase without a corresponding increase in the number of wage-earners. For if the answer to that question is in the affirmative, then the direction of growth of industrialism has changed, our civilization has turned a corner, and the ancient conception of human work as the basis of economic exchange and of the right to live is obsolete, since the work of machines and the conversion of non-human energy take the human place.

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There is no doubt whatever that the answer is in the affirmative. Charts in the preparation of which the Technocrats had no part prove that from and after the year 1919, while the volume of production increased, the number of wage-earners employed in manufacturing leveled off and actually fell, with a loss by 1927 of 3 per cent. And this loss was reflected in actual unemployment totals. Dr. Leo Wolman, whose findings are not subject to the skepticism which meets Mr. Scott's, estimated a minimum of 2,055,000 unemployed outside of agriculture in the boom and booming year, 1927; and the reputable New York State Commissioner for Labor stated that in 1928, with no corresponding slump in factory production, unemployment was as bad as it had been in 1921. Comparison of the years 1923 and 1927, by industries, gives overwhelming support to the conclusion.

Industry	*Change in output*	*Change in employment*
Oil: petroleum refining	84 per cent more	5 per cent less
Tobacco	53 per cent more	13 per cent less
Meat: slaughtering, packing	20 per cent more	19 per cent less
Railroads, 1922-26	30 per cent more	1 per cent less
Construction, Ohio only	11 per cent more	15 per cent less
Automobiles, 1922-26	69 per cent more	48 per cent more
Rubber tires	28 per cent more	7 per cent more
Bituminous coal	4 per cent more	15 per cent less
Electricity, 1922-27	70 per cent more	52 per cent more
Steel	8 per cent more	9 per cent less
Cotton mills	3 per cent more	13 per cent less
Electrical equipment	10 per cent more	6 per cent less
Agriculture, 1920-25	10 per cent more	5 per cent less
Lumber	6 per cent less	21 per cent less
Men's clothing	1 per cent more	7 per cent less
Paper	0	7 per cent less
Shoes	7 per cent less	12 per cent less

These figures have never, so far as I know, been attacked. Mr. Simeon Strunsky makes much of the fact that the census figures for 1920 and 1930 show an increase in the latter year of 1,280,000 in "manufacturing and mechanical industries," but neglects to explain how these occupation figures are obtained. As Mr. Strunsky knows, the decennial census is a population census and not an employment census. A man will speak of his "occupation" as machinist if he was last a machinist, even though he have now no job. And the tabulator has no choice but to write him down as a machinist. Thus the decennial census throws little light upon the problem. One must turn to the census of manufactures where, on the basis of pay rolls, actual employment figures are given. This census shows a drop from 9,000,000 in 1919 to 8,350,000 in 1927 and 8,839,000 in 1929.

Another device of Technocracy's critics is the use of percentages presented in Chapter VI of "Recent Social Trends," which show the proportion of the population, sixteen years of age or over, gainfully employed to have been 52.2 in 1870 and 57.1 in 1930. But this presentation is a trifle disingenuous since it omits the intervening figures. The peak shown by these percentages was not 1930 but 1910, when 59 per cent were gainfully occupied. In 1920 the percentage fell to 58.1 and in 1930 to 57.1.

It seems impossible to deny the fact of the decline. And if the decline in number of wage-earners in the face of an increase in production is admitted, the case is proved. It would be no answer to argue, as many critics of Technocracy do argue, that the lost population of the factories was taken up in the "services"—the hotels and the bond offices and the gas stations. For a society which wished to take advantage of the potential benefits of the new industrialism would not force its displaced workers into these selling services to swell a new Coolidge-era expansion, but would decrease workers' hours to spread the leisure resulting from technological advance. It is only the present misfit distribution system which makes it necessary for one man to take to the road selling insurance while nine men left in the factory go on working ten hours a day. The "services" from this point of view are merely a buffer margin to enable the present system to frustrate its own genius in the interest of its creditors. And the benefits from swelling the services are, as the present disaster proves, temporary at best. But even were it otherwise, the opposition would still have failed to prove that the services will take up all the slack. Surveys have been made showing that 1,907,000 new positions were created in the twenties in medicine and hotels and restaurants and moving-picture theaters and banks and the like as against the 1,485,000 positions estimated to have suffered technological cancelation in industry. But this result neatly omits the population growth in the interval which should have increased the number of wage-earners by 2,000,000. And the only actual case studies so far made to determine how adequately men displaced as puddlers and cutters are really taken up in teaching and stock and bond offices have signally failed to prove the opposition point. The lag between jobs was found to be serious even when new jobs could be found at all, and the only conclusion to be drawn from these studies is that, however the individual components of the residuum of the unemployed may shift and change, the total body of unemployment remains. In the last analysis the opposition is left with the cold comfort of the orthodox economic theory that men displaced by the machine in one industry *must,* either because of reduced costs and greater demand or the deflection elsewhere of the consumer's money, find work eventually. That theory has never been proved.

If the opposition has failed to make its point on the basis of actual employment figures, it has also failed to make its point on the basis of the rate of change. The significant and fundamental fact which no one has denied is that productivity per wage-earner was almost constant for the twenty years from 1899 to 1919, whereas in the eight years following 1919 it increased by approximately *50 per cent.* Critics have suggested that a similar or greater increase in productivity occurred at the beginning of the Industrial Revolution. But the eras are not comparable. Change from handicraft to machine production enormously increased output per worker and displaced thousands of men amid dire forebodings. But mechanization was still only an adjunct to human labor. As production increased with the manufacture of cheaper goods, employment also increased. Only now has man become an adjunct, and an increasingly less important adjunct, of the machine. Only in our time has an increase in production been possible with an actual decrease in number of men employed.

Technocracy as a group is far from invulnerable. Its

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statistics are shaky. Its utterances have been half-cocked. And its philosophy is merely an infantile doctrine of technological determinism to take the place of the equally infantile Marxian dogma of economic determinism. "All social activity," according to the Technocrats, "must obey the laws of physics." Human responsibility for human action is canceled and nothing is required of a man but that he should submit to the laws of physics, measure his life in ergs, and discard all interests which cannot be expressed in foot pounds per second. Technocracy, in other words, goes no farther on the philosophic side than to offer to an increasingly childish humanity another mechanical nurse, another external authority, and another absolute pattern. But for all that, the problem which the word Technocracy unfortunately defines is the vital problem of our time and the hope which the word Technocracy obscures is the first human hope industrialism has offered. Those who ignore the problem and those who discredit the hope do so at their peril.

"Buy American!"

By MAXWELL S. STEWART

"ARE you a good American? Are you moved by the distress of your fellow-citizens—twelve million of them unemployed—by the collapse of industry, the decline of trade, the spread of destitution, the halt of progress in your country?" If your answer is in the affirmative, then your duty is clear: "Americans must buy American goods to the exclusion of any other goods, of any other products, of any other services." Prosperity can only be restored by applying "our purchasing power to the resuscitation of the American market." Led by the chain of newspapers owned by William Randolph Hearst and ably seconded by the *Saturday Evening Post,* we are in the midst of a campaign of unprecedented proportions urging us to turn our backs flatly upon international trade and to seek to build a self-contained national prosperity. There is much in Mr. Hearst's plea that is deserving of sympathetic attention. Recognition of the fact that the roots of the economic depression extend beyond the boundaries of the United States has led many Americans to feel that a restoration of business stability is impossible unless this country severs, as far as possible, its economic ties with the outside world. The heavy losses sustained by investors in foreign securities and the strong presumption that the war debts will not be repaid have served to strengthen this view. Leading economists have taken the position that a serious mistake was made in developing a dependence upon world trade during the last decade, and have declared themselves in favor of durable adjustments which will restore the former reliance on home markets.

It is only natural, moreover, that we should be primarily concerned with the restoration of American prosperity. Since the onset of the world crisis the law of the jungle has prevailed in the international realm. Every nation has sought to protect its domestic market against the forces of world-wide deflation by erecting and strengthening almost prohibitive barriers against cheap foreign imports. Having found the protection that was afforded by such measures to be inadequate, some forty-five countries have abandoned the gold standard and thereby brought renewed pressure upon world prices. As the chief creditor nation, steadfast in its defense of the gold standard, the United States has, in a very real sense, been left holding the bag. Proportionately, this country has suffered a greater business decline than any other, with the possible exceptions of Germany and Poland.

But even a superficial glance is enough to disclose the fundamental fallacy in the "Buy American" campaign. For more than fifty years the United States has maintained a "favorable" balance of trade. Even in the darkest days of the depression there has been a relatively substantial surplus of exports over imports. Foreigners can only purchase American products when they are obtainable at world prices and when they can secure the necessary American currency or its equivalent. If the United States should seriously curtail the importation of foreign goods, and in addition, as Mr. Hearst suggests, suddenly discontinue the annual mass pilgrimage to Europe, there would have to be at least a dollar-for-dollar decline in American exports. Moreover, it might turn out to be much worse. If it is patriotic and wise for all Americans to limit themselves to the purchase of American goods, it is only logical for the British, Chinese, and other foreigners to boycott all American goods. In fact, Mr. Hearst heartily commends the "Buy British" movement as a model for us to emulate.

The best that could be hoped for, consequently, would be the reshuffling of existing purchasing power. The producers for the home market would gain at the expense of those who are dependent upon the maintenance of our export trade—with the farmers, as usual, bearing the bulk of the burden. There would be no increase in the total purchasing power of the country. In practice, however, the effect of such a movement, if it could be successfully organized, would be far more serious than a mere reapportionment of the national income. It would give renewed impetus to the deflationary spiral and nullify all the efforts to check it.

Among the many factors which Mr. Hearst has not taken into account, our present position as a creditor nation is perhaps fundamental. For the first century and a quarter of our national existence we were a net debtor by a considerable sum. As such, our commercial policy had very little influence upon the international financial structure, upon prices, or upon the flow of world trade. While tariffs were strenuously debated as an internal issue, it really made relatively little difference whether a given commodity was produced at home or purchased abroad. Such differences as there were could be measured by comparative prices.

Since the World War, however, an entirely new situation has arisen. As the chief creditor nation we must provide for the receipt of interest and sinking-fund payments. International payments can be made in only three ways—by the transfer of goods (including gold), services, or securities. It follows, therefore, that a creditor must either maintain an import surplus of goods and services, or grant new foreign credits to cover the unpaid balance. As the United States

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has been unwilling to increase its imports through fear of disturbing the home market and has been at the same time desirous of expanding its export trade, it became necessary during the period from 1919 to 1928 for this country to indulge in a veritable orgy of foreign lending.

The effect of the sudden termination of this lending at the time of the stock-market crash in 1929 is too well known to bear repetition. The pressure upon debtors to obtain foreign exchange to meet impending payments led them to throw large quantities of commodities on the world markets at reduced prices, and to curtail imports drastically. The latter was accomplished by raising tariff rates, by imposing import restrictions, and by the method now proposed for our consideration—buy-at-home campaigns. For the debtors some such action was imperative if they were to meet their obligations, but the contagion spread among creditors as well. The United States passed the Hawley-Smoot Tariff Act in June, 1930; France imposed drastic import quotas and called in her short-term foreign balances; Great Britain, suffering more acutely than the others at the time, abandoned her historic free-trade policy and suspended payments in gold. Each of these moves served to make the weight of existing debts more burdensome. With world trade reduced to less than half of its previous value and with international lending practically non-existent, the structure of international indebtedness became dangerously topheavy. Even after taking drastic steps to preserve solvency, many countries were forced to default; in others, such as Germany, default was avoided only by the tying up of short-term loans indefinitely.

To the dyed-in-the-wool isolationist this chronicle of the difficulties encountered in the past three years is merely an illustration of the pitfalls of economic internationalism. Why, he asks, should we be so concerned about foreign trade when even in good years less than 10 per cent of our total production is marketed abroad? Why not concentrate on the home market—the richest in the world? If we include Latin America and Canada in our economic sphere, there is no question that the United States could develop a high degree of national self-sufficiency.

While an excellent theoretical case may be made for insulating ourselves from the vicissitudes of the international market, the practical objections are unanswerable. Although this country is less dependent upon foreign trade than any other of the leading commercial Powers, there are many types of agricultural and industrial activity which rely largely upon foreign markets. We normally raise nearly twice as much cotton as is required for domestic needs, while a large portion of our annual production of tobacco, wheat, petroleum, and copper can only be disposed of abroad. Only about 8 per cent of the output of our factories is exported in normal times, but half of the motor cycles, one-quarter of the agricultural machinery, and 40 per cent of the typewriters are sold overseas. No doubt readjustment could be made, but thousands of men and women, skilled and unskilled, would pay a heavy price during the transition period and many of them would probably never find new employment. Moreover, even when a very small proportion of the total output is sold overseas, the price is determined by international conditions. Isolation would have to be complete to be effective. Halfway measures, such as are ordinarily proposed, would be far more destructive than a thoroughgoing system of "autarchy."

Very few of the advocates of national economic self-containment are aware, however, of the full implications of their proposals. Mr. Hearst certainly is not. Cessation of purchases from foreign countries would automatically deprive all foreigners of the means of payment of interest or principal of all loans, public and private, owed to the United States. This would involve not only the cancelation of eleven billion dollars of intergovernmental indebtedness, but of some fifteen billion dollars of private investments as well. Even dividends on direct investments cannot be paid except in goods or services. Offhand, we would say that neither Mr. Hearst nor the *Saturday Evening Post* has exhibited any notable enthusiasm for the cancelation of the war debts.

Various schemes have been suggested for permitting payment in something other than goods or services, but upon examination it will be found that they only defer or camouflage such payment. Even the receipt of gold would be of practically no value unless the gold were used for the purchase of commodities or services. The uses of gold as a metal are strictly limited: it cannot be eaten or worn; additional amounts are not needed for internal currency; and consequently it would lie idle in the vault of the Federal Reserve Bank, a mere shadow of its former glory. Similarly the transfer of ownership of foreign business enterprises or colonies would be useless unless we were willing to receive the benefits in some concrete form. If we were not allowed to travel abroad or even to purchase foreign periodicals in place of the Hearst publications, our economic empire would become worthless—as it is rapidly becoming through the pursuit of our present policies.

It is not likely that the "Buy American" campaign will in itself have any marked effect on foreign trade. Very few persons are willing to inquire regarding the origin of the goods they purchase. In these days, moreover, the average housewife is ruled by the thought of price regardless of other considerations. The fact that Japanese rag rugs can be landed in this country at a cost of six cents each, including duty, while the cost of production of similar articles in the United States is twenty-nine cents, if true, is in reality the best possible argument for buying the Japanese product. But even if the "Buy American" campaign should make more headway with the public than seems likely to be the case, the fact remains that no business concern worthy of the name would pass by a cheap foreign product in order to purchase an American-made article of the same quality at a markedly higher price. The steel industry, for example, is not likely to purchase inferior American manganese if it can obtain a higher quality of Russian or South American manganese for less money. One even wonders whether the pulpwood used in manufacturing paper for the Hearst press is entirely of American origin?

The chief danger of the campaign is not its direct effect, but the possibility that, by befogging the public mind, needed tariff reform will be rendered the more difficult. No lasting relief can possibly be obtained for the world's ills until tariff rivalry has been checked. With the World Economic Conference scheduled to meet before many months, it is important that the United States should be in a position to make drastic concessions to restore international business activity. Such a step is bound to be hindered, if not rendered impossible, if the passions of nationalism are unnecessarily inflamed. Good patriots will not "Buy American."

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"Saving" the Theater

By LEE SIMONSON

DURING the last ten years New York's theater managers have turned a system of play producing into nothing less than a system of organized waste. They are at last beginning to realize how high the price of waste can be. Faced with a lack of easy money from "angels" who used to back almost any kind of play and from a public that was willing to pay $6.60 to ticket-brokers for plays worth $3.30 a seat—faced, in short, with a difficult business problem, the business men who pretend to manage the theater are indulging in a public exhibition of panic. They gather under a wailing wall to lament the fall of their Jerusalem. The theater is "ruined." It is the fault of everyone connected with the theater except, of course, the managers themselves. The theater has been ruined by critics who are genuinely critical and by stage hands who demand double pay for working on Sundays or until two or three in the morning. The cost of production is "ruinous." The latest villain to be discovered is Henrik Ibsen. The author of "Peer Gynt" and "Rosmersholm" started a vogue for realism; obviously that is the reason why the American theater has fallen from its high estate. It is quite irrelevant that Henrik Ibsen's poisonous realism was introduced in the 1880's and that the producers have been making money even in relatively recent seasons out of such hits as "The Jest," "Hamlet," "Richard III," "The Emperor Jones," "Marco Millions," "Mourning Becomes Electra," "Elizabeth the Queen," "Beggar on Horseback," "The Green Pastures," "What's in a Name?" the Music Box revues, and "Of Thee I Sing." If the public is not convinced, more villains will be discovered. The managers, however, who a few years ago pocketed individual profits from their "smash hits" of $50,000 and up, are prepared to "save" the theater from its villains if only someone will kindly raise money for them and ask no questions. The latest scheme is for some sort of an association of theatergoers—300,000 paying $5 apiece—who will provide $1,500,000 for the theater managers to do with as they please.

Bernard Shaw is said to have flabbergasted a movie magnate by remarking: "You see, Mr. G., the trouble with you is you're an artist; I'm a business man." New York theater managers, although they have often encouraged artists and proved to be artists themselves, have seldom been business men. They have been quite as irresponsible as business executives in every other field. During periods of prosperity they connive at every form of speculation and inflation, create a maximum labor turnover, and sky-rocket prices, but fail to provide out of maximum profits enough capital reserves to stabilize their industry. Faced with falling profits they make a state of economic chaos still more chaotic by frantic price-cutting and an attempt to reduce wages to sweatshop levels.

The truth about the "show business" has been told many times. It needs to be stated again at a moment when concerted propaganda is being used to mislead the theatergoing public. Wages and cost of production are high in the theatrical business but the theater managers help to make them so. Every wage, whether of an actor or a stage hand, includes unemployment insurance. It was only after a bitter strike that managers agreed to assure an actor even two weeks' pay in return for four weeks of free rehearsals. The Theater Guild, which accepted the Actors' Equity contract at the outset, later found that many able actors preferred to work for a lower weekly salary and a fair chance of some share of the profits, in return for an assurance of from twenty to thirty weeks of work a year. But how many managements offered to actors, except a few "stars" with an assured box-office value, a share of profits when there were profits to divide, or agreed to keep their theaters open thirty weeks a year? That would have meant accepting a responsibility. And the typical theatrical manager wants to be completely irresponsible. Stage hands, like actors, are expected to accept a 20 or 30 per cent reduction in wages in return for complete uncertainty as to whether they are to be employed for two weeks a year or twenty.

The cost of overtime is a heavy item in play production. Union men, who prefer to work only eight hours a day, have steadily raised the cost of overtime labor in an attempt to discourage it. But the managers as a body refuse to give them any help. Almost invariably they make up their minds at the last minute, with the result that settings can be got out on time only by having crews of scene painters work until ten o'clock night after night. The building and painting for productions is concentrated in two rush seasons—one in August and September for early openings, and another just before Christmas for openings aimed to get the holiday trade. In order to handle five or six shows at a time, contractors have to be equipped with a great deal of carpentering machinery and large painting lofts. And the managers make it as difficult as possible for the contractors to pay their rent and overhead between seasons on the necessary space and equipment. With a few exceptions, the producers either take months to make final payments or never pay in full. The outstanding debts to some of the principal scene-painting studios in New York are over $256,000. Several studios have been forced out of business because they could not collect money owed them. One carpenter shop carried an unpaid balance of $85,000 from one of the most successful managers on Broadway. If one includes the unpaid bills of all the carpenters and property-makers and the amounts due to scene designers—one is still owed $10,000 and another $11,000 although their fees average only $1,000 a production—the outstanding debt of theater managers for productions made during years of prosperity is well over $500,000.

Naturally the cost of building and painting scenery is inflated, not only by the cost of overtime labor, but by the necessity for carrying this staggering burden of uncollected and uncollectable debts. Carpenters and painters are paid in three instalments. Because they are rarely certain of collecting their last third, their contract prices must be high enough so that the first two-thirds will cover their costs and show some profit. Otherwise they would go bankrupt waiting for the next theatrical season to begin. In a short rush season they must make enough to cover their overhead and

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rent for an entire year on the equipment and space necessary to handle the next rush.

The cost of settings could be cut almost a third if enough managers who were planning to open a show in September would start building and painting their productions in April and May and early summer. If they allowed eight weeks leeway during the winter instead of the usual four or less, almost all overtime charges could be eliminated. Will they do this? As a body they refuse. They wail in public over the cost of union labor, and make overtime unavoidable; they continue to demand cash prices while they abuse credit to a point that would have long ago wrecked any other industry.

The other great item in production costs is rehearsal labor. Theater managers have also forced this to a maximum by letting real-estate speculators build their theaters for them with stages so small that almost every piece of scenery has to be handled three or four times oftener than should be necessary. They have shown complete indifference to the idea of installing labor-saving machinery. Three separate systems for handling settings with a minimum of hand labor have been perfected in Germany and have been in use there for the past twenty years. At least two of these would be entirely practical here if stages were built twice as wide and twice as deep as they usually are now. Nevertheless, New York managers have never made the slightest organized effort to get either the stage space or the equipment needed if theaters are to be run economically. They prefer not to invest a cent of their profits either in land or equipment that would permit rehearsal or running costs to be cut. Here, as in every other department, they prefer to let someone else take the risk, and continue to rent stages so small and so inadequately equipped that in order to open a show a large crew of stage hands often has to work twenty-four or thirty-six hours at a stretch.

The typical theater manager persists in being irresponsible. He will do nothing to cut his expenses by improving theater architecture, installing labor-saving equipment, obviating overtime, reducing labor turnover, distributing production, eliminating waste, or minimizing the risk of unemployment. Theaters, carpenters, scene painters, scene designers, stage hands, and actors must keep going somehow until he gets around to using them. He will do nothing to organize the theater; he complains because other workers in the theater have organized themselves into unions and are able to resist his efforts to make them work either without pay or for inadequate pay under working conditions that are often intolerable.

Ten years of unbridled individualism have produced the same wreckage in the theater as everywhere else. The theater can never be wholly organized. With as little as $10,000 anyone can put on a play which, if it is a "smash hit," may earn half a million dollars or more in a year or two. The lone individual playing his private "hunch" is a necessary figure in the theater and a desirable one. As often as not he brings new ideas and new methods into the theater, keeping novelty alive where stereotypes easily become a habit. But there is no reason why any producer could not experiment even more effectively in an organized theater than in a disorganized one. The insurance companies and trust companies, which now hold so many theaters, both in and out of New York, on which they cannot collect mortgage interest or rent often enough to pay the taxes, could enforce a reorganization of the theater industry which might put it on a sound business basis. Otherwise they may be forced to liquidate their holdings at twenty cents on the dollar.

Planned and controlled production, with a maximum of social and economic responsibility to both labor and the consumer public, is the way out for the theater as for every other industry. The preliminary steps for the theater are approximately as follows: Demolish at least one-third of the existing theaters in New York and all but one or two in each of the principal "road" cities. Pool the losses, which will be far more quickly recouped by converting surplus theaters to other uses than by cutthroat competition for tenants who do not pay the present cost of housing them. Remodel the stages of the remaining theaters, instal labor-saving scene-shifting and lighting equipment standardized by a board of consultants composed of architects, scene designers, and engineers, and thereby cut labor costs. Instal this improved equipment in all road theaters, so that settings can be built for one system of scene-shifting and labor costs thereby be cut down everywhere. Support the road either by organizing out-of-town repertory companies of the permanent surplus of unemployed actors in New York or by sending New York successes on the road with the original casts after a four months' run in New York. In return ask for a guaranteed sale of seats in road cities, subscribed for in advance. Refuse to rent a theater except to an accredited managers' association which will require that all its members put more capital into their business than the cost of one production, every member either to put up a cash bond for the cost of building and painting scenery, as he now does for actors' salaries, or to agree, under penalty of being disbarred, to settle all bills within thirty days. Build and paint productions at least eight weeks in advance of the opening date and distribute a definite proportion over the summer months. In return get scenery built and painted on a cost-plus basis. Agree to keep all theaters open forty weeks a year, and in return ask for a lowered union wage scale. Instal air conditioning to encourage summer audiences. In return get a reduced scale of actors' and stage hands' salaries for the summer months. Set the scale of theater admissions annually and put the ticket speculator and the cut-rate agency out of business. (This can be done; it was almost done when the theater managers made up their minds to do it.) Resale can be reduced to a minimum by printing a ticket in two parts, the stub, not showing the location of his seat, to be kept by the purchaser. Offer tickets at reduced prices to people who will buy subscription books of tickets of five or ten or more, and give these subscribers preferred locations even on opening nights. Have both the costs and the running expenses of every production audited by a central auditing bureau. Provide funds for organization, experiment, technical research, and unemployment insurance by collecting a progressive tax on profits from $50,000 up.

These suggestions are entirely practical if the men who pretend to run the theater really want to run it on an efficient and permanent basis. Their chief problem is to find a legal way of setting up some scheme for effective control which nine old men will not declare a conspiracy in restraint of trade or a violation of that amendment of the Constitution originally designed to protect the property rights of newly enfranchised Negroes.

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The Farmer and the Tariff

By WAYNE GARD

THE farmer, apparently, has at last had his eyes opened to the realities of the tariff. The overwhelming defeat of the Republican Party in the last election indicates clearly that the farm vote can no longer be held in line by eloquent pictures of the benefits that agriculture receives from the protective tariff. It is true, of course, that Roosevelt promised to retain existing tariffs on farm products. But his definite pledge on this point was made in an Eastern city almost on the eve of the election and did not penetrate to many of the dirt farmers. As a matter of fact, most of the farmers who voted for Roosevelt would have voted for him even if he had threatened to remove farm tariffs. Prices talk louder than speeches, and with some farm crops selling at prices lower than at any time since Elizabethan days, the most persuasive high-tariff Republican would have had difficulty in proving to the farmer that the removal of tariffs on cotton, wheat, and corn would make the prices of these commodities any lower than they were at election time.

There were murmurings among the farmers even in 1928, but these signs of unrest were ignored by the G. O. P. As usual, party hacks were sent through the corn and wheat States dispensing the old Republican soothing-syrup—consisting of promises of higher tariff rates on farm products. And for the most part the farmer swallowed it once more, as he had been doing through a long series of Republican campaigns. In 1860, when the new anti-slavery party first swept into office, it tempted the East with promises of a tariff wall and it tempted the West with promises of railroads and homesteads. Soon afterwards it discovered that the tariff argument could be worked upon the farmers as well as upon the manufacturers. The farmer turned out to be an easy mark; a tariff policy that was upheld by the party of Lincoln, he thought, could not be far wrong.

The promises made in 1928 were made good. In 1930 President Hoover signed the Smoot-Hawley Tariff Act, which raised the rates on many agricultural products—as well as on almost every other commodity which conceivably might be imported. This tariff boost, together with a shiny new Farm Board, was to cure the farmer's troubles and make him prosperous again. The beneficent effects of the new tariff, the farmers were told, would be felt almost immediately. In June, 1930, Senator James E. Watson of Indiana declared: "I here and now predict, and I ask my fellow-Senators to recall this prediction in the days to come, that if this bill is passed, this nation will be on the upgrade financially, economically, and commercially within thirty days, and that within a year from this time we shall have regained the peak of prosperity we lost last October."

By the beginning of the campaign of 1932 the G. O. P. had junked the Farm Board, but it still defended valiantly the Smoot-Hawley tariff as an aid to the farmer, and the maintenance of this tariff was the principal point in the farm program which Hoover enunciated in his Des Moines speech on October 4. An abandonment of this tariff, he declared, meant "destruction at your own firesides." But when he pictured the danger of Argentine corn underselling Iowa corn in this country, he apparently was unaware that on that very day corn in Argentine was selling at four cents a bushel higher than in Chicago. The farmers were not worried over the specter of being ruined by Argentine corn; their ruin was being accomplished in other ways. The President's alarmist picture of Mexican cattle trying to cross the Rio Grande was scarcely more convincing. "There are this minute," he declared, "two million cattle in the northern states of Mexico seeking market. The price is about $2.50 per hundred pounds on the south bank of the Rio Grande. It is $4.50 on the north bank—and only the tariff wall between." But the cattleman knew better than to compare the scrawny, mountain-grazed animals of Mexico with the fine Texas steers that are the result of many years of careful breeding. Moreover, he knew that not all American steers have been selling at $4.50 a hundred pounds. Idaho ranchers have been getting from $1.50 to $2.

An Idaho woman, calling the attention of a newspaper editor to this last fact, went on to ask:

> How much would a tariff of $50 a head on steers help the Idaho farmers? Here I can buy the best onions in the world for 20 cents a sack and the best potatoes in the world for 25 cents a sack. How much would a tariff of $5 a hundred on onions and potatoes help the Idaho farmer? With the apple crop estimated at one-third below normal, our farmers find it impossible to continue to pick their Jonathan apples. Neither could they pick their prunes. How much would a higher tariff on apples and prunes help out the Idaho farmer?

The Idaho woman's questions remain unanswered, as do those of Iowa farmers who have been getting from 4 to 8 cents a bushel for their corn. The Smoot-Hawley tariff of 25 cents a bushel on corn has not helped these farmers. Instead, it has led Canada to impose a retaliatory tariff of the same amount and to import large quantities of corn from the Argentine while American ears rot on the stalks. The highest agricultural tariff in American history did not prevent farm products in this country from selling at an average of only 56 per cent of the pre-war level on October 15, three weeks before the election. The tariff did not prevent the drop of wheat prices to new all-time lows and the slump of the prices of grains, fruits, and vegetables in general to new low levels for the twenty-two-year period covered by the records of the Department of Agriculture.

The present situation of the farmer is enough to make him more skeptical of political cure-alls. In 1931 alone the value of his land declined 15 per cent, while the value of his live stock dropped 40 per cent. From 1919 to 1931 the capital valuation of American agriculture dropped from $79,100,000,000 to $45,000,000,000, and the total farm income slipped from $16,900,000,000 to $6,900,000,000. Under such circumstances the farmer is not likely to believe that he would be even worse off if it were not for the beneficent Republican tariff. He may reflect that he was far better off when tariffs were low and there were duties on only a few agricultural products.

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Take the case of wheat. This grain was on the free list during the eight years when it reached its highest prices, largely because of the World War. When the Republicans came back into power they immediately decided to save the wheat farmer by a protective tariff. The Farmers' Emergency Tariff Act imposed a wheat tariff of 35 cents a bushel in 1922. A few months later the rate was changed to 30 cents by the Fordney-McCumber Act, but in 1924 President Coolidge, by proclamation, raised it to 42 cents. This rate was preserved in the Smoot-Hawley Act of 1930.

When the wheat tariff was imposed, the market price was $1.25 a bushel. For nearly two years now it has been below 50 cents, while the price actually received by the farmer has been, in many places, between 20 and 30 cents. Moreover, wheat exports have declined, and the wheat tariff has been a strong factor in the destruction of something like $100,000,000 worth of American trade with Canada. On November 3, five days before the election, wheat sold in Chicago at a price actually below the tariff. This meant that the wheat farmer was "protected" by a 100 per cent tariff. But it also meant that at local elevators he was receiving only about 20 cents a bushel for the better grades of wheat, which cost him 80 or 90 cents to raise, and an even lower price for the inferior grades. With this 100 per cent tariff protection, American wheat and flour exports fell to 14,200,000 bushels for the period from July 1 to October 8, 1932, as compared with 43,900,000 bushels for the corresponding period of the previous year. At the same time Canadian wheat exports were running about 55 per cent ahead of those for 1931.

The wheat tariff was effective only as applied to Canadian wheat formerly imported by Northwestern millers. This annual import of Canadian wheat—12,000,000 bushels—constituted only 2 per cent of the American consumption and had practically no effect upon the price which American wheat-growers received. This wheat was largely non-competitive, since it was of a type not grown in this country in quantity sufficient for the millers' needs. It was desired because of its much higher protein content and was bought at a premium. The wheat tariff has served as a virtual embargo against this Canadian wheat, needed in the milling of American flour. Wheat imports from Canada have dropped to less than 1/20 of 1 per cent of the former figure. The American consumer of bread has been the loser, while the farmer has gained nothing. In fact, the farmer has lost, too. The wheat embargo has closed Canada to American corn and has led England to give preference to Canadian over American wheat.

Most of our agricultural tariffs are of the "gold-brick" variety. Since in the case of nearly every farm product the United States is an exporter rather than an importer, the tariffs on such products generally are ineffective; there are no imports against which they can be charged. Thus they are of no value to the farmer. In fact, they add to the irritation of other nations and spur them to erect retaliatory tariff walls against the American farm surplus. There are, of course, a few agricultural commodities of which we import more than we export, and on these the tariff theoretically is effective. The principal products in this category are wool, cattle, and sugar. Yet even on these commodities the value of the tariff is strongly disputed from the point of view of the farmer as well as from that of the consumer, who may be forced to pay higher prices because of the duties.

The profitable raising of both cattle and sheep in this country has depended mainly upon the availability of cheap frontier land and public grazing ranges. The tariff has had little effect upon ranching, the number of sheep and cattle fluctuating only slightly in response to changes in rates; in fact, the number of cattle has declined under the recent high rates. The current low prices of cattle, sheep, and wool testify to the inadequacy of high tariffs on these products. The production of sugar in the United States has varied more with changes in tariff rates, but in this instance, too, the tariff has been of dubious benefit. The climatic and labor advantages of certain other countries give them a favored position in sugar production which the American high tariff on sugar has not been able to overcome. In the production of cane sugar in this country the development of a disease-resisting variety of cane with a high sucrose content has been far more important than the tariff rate.

Even so, where sugar production has been made profitable in the United States, the profit often has been obtained at the price of labor conditions little better than slavery. One of the supposed benefits of high tariff rates is the maintenance of high standards of living, but this benefit is not noticeable in the sugar areas of either Louisiana or Utah. The Utah sugar beets are grown largely by the toil of impoverished Mexicans and their children, under working conditions outlawed long ago in more civilized States.

The farmer's major grievance against the tariff, of course, is not that he fails to derive the promised benefit from the duties on agricultural products but that he suffers infinite harm from the high rates on manufactured goods. In an analysis of the Fordney-McCumber tariff several years ago, the American Farm Bureau Federation estimated that the farmers gained annually through the tariff $30,000,000 but lost $331,000,000, making a net loss of $301,000,000. The net loss of the farmers from the Smoot-Hawley tariff is of course much larger. Even more important than this direct loss is the indirect harm the tariff brings them in curtailing the foreign market for what they have to sell. This is being done by retaliatory tariffs, embargoes, and favorable trade arrangements with rival nations. When we close our markets to the manufactured goods of nations like England and Germany, it is only natural that they should buy less wheat and cotton and pork from us and buy more from those nations which are willing to take goods in exchange. Here are some facts which the G. O. P. publicity machine failed to mention in the last campaign. From 1921 to 1923 Germany bought from the United States an average of 34,000,000 bushels of wheat a year. In 1929 it bought only 1,674,000 bushels from us. The United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland used to buy 30,000,000 bushels of wheat a year from us before the World War; in 1929 it bought here only 16,276,000 bushels. The British are now inclined to buy all the wheat they can from the dominions and as little as possible from us. And much of the bacon they formerly obtained from America they now buy from Denmark. American wheat must now hurdle a tariff of 37.2 cents in both Germany and France.

The falling off in American agricultural exports in recent years—despite increased production—does not result wholly from retaliation against our tariff. In some European countries there is a lessening of consumption or an in-

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crease in domestic production or both. Yet our tariff, which shuts foreign goods out of the United States, is a weighty factor in closing the European market to the surplus products of the American farmer. Nations, like individuals, prefer to trade with friends. Thus Germany buys corn and wheat in the Argentine because that nation is willing to buy its toys, dyes, and cotton goods. Argentinian exports of corn more than doubled from 1923 to 1927, rising from 128,000,000 to 272,000,000 bushels. The current revival of barter in international trade may be an instructive lesson for some of those who have not yet learned that all trade, in the long run, must be an exchange of commodities. Nearly forty nations now have barter agreements, and the use of this method of trade appears to be increasing rapidly. The resort to barter should be an indication that if our agricultural surplus is to be marketed profitably abroad, we must be willing to buy from other countries goods of equal value. The better-informed farmers have known all along that the talk of rescuing agriculture with tariffs was political hokum. And now this view has penetrated to the general run of farmers. True, these farmers realize that tariff reform will not in itself restore prices which will make agriculture profitable again. But they have had enough of high tariffs and are willing to try lower ones.

Behind the Cables

By E. D. H.

Vienna, January 15

IF things don't go to pot in Jugoslavia pretty soon, most of the political prophets of Central Europe will be out of jobs. An appalling situation in the Serb kingdom seems rapidly to be coming to a head. The country, like its neighbors, is broke, and has had to default on or put off its foreign debt. The new constitution, a fraud and a sham, has turned out to be almost as unworkable as the overt dictatorship, and the Serb-Croat quarrel is as bitter as ever. Police terrorism, a blanket censorship, and a gagged parliament blacken the country. The Slovenes and Bosnians, heretofore fairly tractable, have joined the Croats in their demand for federalism, and the king, the chief centripetal force of the state, is apparently no longer able personally to bridge the various widening schisms. It is time for a show-down—or a blow-up, in which all of Central Europe might easily be involved. For a whole series of perplexing foreign irritations has developed, doubtless in correspondence to the ascending domestic alarms. Some Dalmatian hotheads mutilated the old Venetian lions in Trogir. Mussolini bristled in answer. It seems a minor quarrel, until you remember that Italy has not given up its Dalmatian claims, which are chiefly based on just such reminders of old-time Venetian hegemony as the lions. Further south, Italy initiates a new series of commercial undertakings with Albania; Jugoslavia replies by charging an attempt to form an Italo-Albanian customs union. This is not a likely possibility, since Albania has practically no customs; the Jugoslavs used the idea as a trial balloon to alarm the Powers. Proceeding counter-clockwise, we find Macedonia as murderously agitated as ever, and the Bulgar-Jugoslav frontier closed even to peasants who own and have to work property on both sides of the border. Eastward, Rumania, theoretically an ally, is flirting with Italy because she was ditched by France and Poland in the non-aggression negotiations with Soviet Russia. Northward, in Hungary, reports mention squadrons of Italian airplanes arriving in Budapest for the use of the Hungarian army. In Austria a cache of 50,000 old rifles is discovered, Austrian arms captured by Italy during the war and now sent back for "repair," that is, for the use either of Hungary or of the Austrian semi-fascist Heimwehr.

ITALIAN LIONS, JUGOSLAV LAMBS

Jugoslavia, thus encircled, succeeded in frightening the Little Entente into organizing a permanent secretariat at Geneva. Hungary answered at once with the appointment of a new Foreign Minister, Kolomann von Kanya, an appointment which the Jugoslavs consider as almost a deliberate insult. Kanya was the man who, as chief of the press department of the old monarchy, slandered the Serbs in November, 1912, by charging that the Austro-Hungarian consul at Prizren, Montenegro, a man named George Prohaska, had been attacked and mutilated by local Serbs. Kanya was also involved, my friends here tell me, in the Windischgrätz franc-forgery plot; he rented part of his Budapest house to the priest, Father Zadravetz, in whose rooms the forged francs were found. Also, the three Hungarians who were to circulate the francs in Holland received their laissez-passers from the Hungarian legation in Berlin, where Kanya was the minister.

King Alexander has, perhaps, a last card up his sleeve in dealing with the obstinate and difficult Croats. He may offer them separatism. He is described as being so fed up with his own country that he is willing to cut it in half. This sounds excessively sensational, since kings do not ordinarily reduce the territories of their realms, but I have it on exceedingly good authority that the idea has been broached. The king is saying, in effect: "If you Croats dislike us so heartily, get out and try to run a country of your own." Svetozar Pribitchevitch, the dissident Serb leader now in exile in Paris, writes that Alexander threatened as long ago as 1929 to "amputate" Croatia if the Croats continued to "misbehave." Pribitchevitch also says, by the way, that the Queen-Mother of Rumania and the Queen of Jugoslavia, in conversation with a man who was recently a cabinet minister in Belgrade, discussed quite openly the possibility that he, Pribitchevitch, might be removed, as was Raditch, by assassination.

Amputation of Croatia would produce a pretty situation. The horror of the French at such wholesale murder of the peace treaties can be imagined; but Alexander and the French are not getting along too well. Politically, it is a clever threat. The Croats could not survive alone, and they know it. They do not want complete independence. They want autonomy within a Jugoslav federation. This Alexander will not give them. He has tried to rule Jugo-

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slavia so far through a policy of strict pan-Serb centralism. If he still resolutely refuses to consider what to outsiders seems the normal solution—that is, federalism—then separatism, or amputation, is a final alternative, although an extremely radical one.

I would call attention to the manifesto, which was recently published in England but which did not, I hear, get much attention in America, wherein a group of British publicists appealed to public opinion, and incidentally the British government, in behalf of intervention to force Alexander to modify the terms of his rule and accede to the Croat demands. Otherwise, say these gentlemen, disruption of the Jugoslav state seems inevitable. I do not know another case in recent history in which a group of private persons has similarly taken the initiative to urge international pressure on a foreign Power. But what is particularly amazing is the list of signatories. One would expect to see the names of such staunch liberals as Gilbert Murray, H. A. L. Fisher, G. P. Gooch, and H. W. Nevinson. But another signatory is Lord Cushendun, formerly Ronald McNeill. And two others are Wickham Steed and R. W. Seton-Watson, who were godfathers of Jugoslavia. Things must, indeed, have reached a pretty pass in Alexander's kingdom.

In view of the recent amnesty in Germany I hope that the case of forty-one-year-old Private August Jaeger has received some notice. The Christmas spirit of Von Schleicher is not quite all-embracing. Jaeger has just been sentenced to ten years' penal servitude by the Supreme Court at Leipzig on a charge of treason—for having been captured by the French in Flanders eighteen years ago with a primitive gas-mask on his person! The prosecution demanded fourteen years in jail for Jaeger, and refrained from asking the death penalty "only because the Germans had not been materially injured by Jaeger's alleged disclosures." Jaeger, it was said, was a deserter, and the French found him in possession of an anti-gas contrivance with which the Germans had been equipped in anticipation of their own first secret gas attack. He was arrested on the same charge in 1920, but acquitted; his rearrest followed an article by a French general naming him as a person from whom the French gained knowledge of the German plans. This was in 1915. It is now 1933. It will be 1943 before August Jaeger again sees the light of freedom.

INTOLERANCE IN GERMANY

It is also interesting, in connection with the Schleicher amnesty, to note that Dr. Anna Siemsen, a former deputy in the Prussian Diet, has been forbidden permission to lecture in Thuringia because she supported the views of Professor Gumbel, who lost his job at Heidelberg University for having said that a turnip was a better symbol of war than a heroic virgin; that Herr Otto Rossbilt had his passport confiscated as he was preparing for a trip to Copenhagen because he had exposed some of the more obvious indecencies of the arms business in his book "The War Industry"; and that Professor Hans Cohn has been expelled from the law faculty of Breslau University on the basis of two grievous sins—he wrote an article defending Trotzky and he was born a Jew.

The Geneva machine-gun murders of November 9, when eleven citizens were brutally shot by a raw company of army recruits, continue to pile up victims. The latest is apparently M. William Martin, for many years the foreign editor of the *Journal de Genève* and one of the two or three most distinguished liberal journalists in Europe. M. Martin happened to be in Rome when the murders occurred. But his point of view regarding them may be well imagined. His paper, a wholly reactionary sheet, tried to justify them, and joined the general propaganda seeking to gag such journalists as Robert Dell, *The Nation's* correspondent, who forced the issue into the open. And now I hear from Geneva that M. Martin, who has seemed as much an institution on his paper as is J. L. Garvin on the London *Observer,* is shortly to resign to accept a chair in history at, I believe, the University of Zurich. The world of European journalism thus loses a brilliant figure, but there is compensation for all calamities; I can imagine no reason whatever why any person should ever again read a copy of the *Journal de Genève.*

AGAIN THE GENEVA MASSACRE

In the Driftway

THE Drifter is not a philanthropist. He has never had anything to give except advice, and his principles are against giving that. Nevertheless, he is going to break his rule for once and pass on the details of a method he has just learned for living on nothing a day—an art which is particularly needed at the present moment. All you have to have is youth, a moderate gift for acting, and a lead quarter.

* * * * *

ITS inventor, now a prominent radical, discovered the method by accident some years ago. Having arrived in this country at the age of seventeen completely broke, he hit upon the scheme of following coal wagons to their destination and then demanding the job of putting the coal in the cellar. Usually he got the job and fifteen cents for his labor. One day, however, in a burst of what happened to be generosity, his employer gave him a quarter, and being hungry as usual, he went to a bakery shop to buy a loaf of bread. After he had put the loaf under his arm the proprietor stopped him with the information that the quarter was lead and that he had better hand over the bread. Hungry and disappointed, the tears came into his eyes and the baker was touched. "It's all right," he said, "keep the loaf." It was not until he was out in the street again that the possibilities of the lead quarter dawned upon the ingenious young man, but as soon as they had, he hied him to a delicatessen store and demanded ten cents worth of liverwurst. The little drama was reenacted, and though the tears did not come quite so easily this time, they sufficed. "Do you know," he concludes, "I lived on that bad quarter for three weeks."

* * * * *

THE story, however, does not end here. The Drifter was unsatisfied. If for three weeks, why not for three years or three decades? Here was the ideal "elastic currency." There seemed no reason why anyone should ever work. The Drifter was almost sorry that he never had and could not, therefore, stop now. But when the subject was

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broached, the face of his informant darkened. There were no tears or anything like them, but the sense of a great, never-to-be-forgotten wrong distorted his usually genial features. "One day," he said, "I gave my quarter to a street-car conductor and the blankety-blank-blank gave me back twenty cents' change."

* * * * *

THUS the Drifter was reminded that there is a catch in everything except drifting and he has gone back to that. It occurs to him that the story of the lead quarter is a modern rationalistic equivalent of the universal folk-tale of the three wishes, but he is convinced that we *do* progress. The two peasants got nothing whatever except a wooden spoon (in an inappropriate place) out of what seemed all that two human beings could want. The modern young man got at least bread, liverwurst, and other desirable things for three whole weeks. He lost the magic charm only when he felt above walking, and that, no doubt, was a punishment for asking more than a philosopher really needs. He would still be living in sweet idleness today if he had only been content with as little as his friend

THE DRIFTER

Correspondence

"Livy's Pictured Page"

TO THE EDITORS OF THE NATION:

As a Hellenist may I protest energetically against the left-handed compliment to Greek literature implied in your reviewer's commendation of Burton Rascoe's "onslaught on the Romans, the dreariest bores in recorded history, and their dreary literature," in his "Titans of Literature"? Isn't there enough barbarism rampant all about us at the present time without trying to prejudice "intelligent youngsters" against the people who more than any other, except the Greeks, are the source of such measure of civilization as we possess? To Cicero, more than to any other human being, we owe the wide dissemination of those ideals of liberty, justice, and humanity for which *The Nation* stands.

With respect to his style, a competent critic says: "The perfect harmony of his periods, the exquisite choice of his words, the delicate balance of his cadences, whose sound keeps up an ever-running accompaniment to sense, and the majestic roll of his wonderful perorations are absolutely without counterpart in Greek, or English, or any other language whatsoever, and they make reasonable and true the judgment of Quintilian that 'Cicero is now less the name of a man than of eloquence itself.'"

As to Caesar, it is hard to qualify in any other manner than as crass ignorance the reference to his polished periods as "Western Unionese." It is true that many a boy or girl, through imperfect knowledge of the language or dull teaching, may find the "Gallic War" a bore, but this experience should not be confounded with the actual quality of that celebrated work, which in the hands of the good teacher is, like other great books, "alive and of thrilling interest." And anyone who has ever had the memorable experience of hearing a great teacher, such as the late Professor Greenough of Harvard, read "Livy's pictured page" and bring out the inimitable chiaroscuro of his matchless style will have a higher opinion than your reviewer both of Livy and of professors.

Greenwich, Conn., January 8 E. F. CLAFLIN

Brooklyn Edison

TO THE EDITORS OF THE NATION:

In view of Jerome Count's excellent article in *The Nation* of January 18, your readers will be interested in a movement which combines the interests of workers and consumers against the power utilities. For the past two years the Public Committee on Power Utilities and Labor has given its support to the Brotherhood of Edison Employees, who, single-handed, have waged a courageous and effective fight against one of the largest operating electric utilities in the country—the Brooklyn Edison Company. This company, during 1931 and 1932, while increasing its dividends by 40 per cent, or a total of almost $3,000,000, laid off 5,000 men—40 per cent of the company's total labor force.

The Public Committee on Power Utilities and Labor has carried this fight to the Public Service Commission and has established an important victory for utility labor throughout the country by obtaining an order from the commission directing the Brooklyn Edison Company to reinstate the 5,000 employees or justify its entire labor policy before the commission. By this action the Public Service Commission has for the first time recognized that labor conditions within public utilities are a matter for State regulation and control.

Plans have been formulated to organize consumers to back this fight before the Public Service Commission and for direct action against the Brooklyn Edison Company through a voluntary curtailment of electric consumption. This will be a movement of widespread national significance, since the electrical-utility situation is identical throughout the country.

All work has been voluntary and not a single dollar has been expended for salaries or compensation of any kind to active participants. The committee, however, needs substantial contributions from consumers and labor in order to make thoroughgoing preparation for hearings before the Public Service Commission and to carry its fight to the consumer. Contributions should be sent to Francis A. Henson, secretary, 128 East Sixteenth Street, New York City.

New York, January 16 ELIOT WHITE
FRANCIS A. HENSON
A. J. MUSTE
WILLIAM BEEDIE

Socialists and the Bonus

TO THE EDITORS OF THE NATION:

While agreeing with your correspondent, Felix Morrow, in his expression of regret at seeing the name of Oswald Garrison Villard linked with a group of reactionaries in active opposition to prepayment of the bonus, I should like to know who gave Mr. Morrow authority to lump "the liberals and Socialists" together as fighting such prepayment. If he had said "some liberals and Socialists," he would have been fairly correct, as it is quite clear, at least in the case of the Socialist Party, that no formal declaration was made on the bonus question. Norman Thomas himself finally came around to approval of payment of the bonus to unemployed and needy veterans as a step toward a general move for federal aid to the idle millions. Many other Socialists were outspoken in their support of the ex-service men's demands. Apparently Mr. Morrow has the happy Communist habit of bunching all non-Communists together and damning them as "a reactionary mass," regardless of their varying views and acts.

Hollis, N. Y., January 1 HARRY T. SMITH

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One Veteran's Story

To the Editors of The Nation:

At the time of the last war my son Benjamin Arnold Willits of Boonton, New Jersey, was enrolled in the army in Class A. He trained in Camp Dix and Camp McClellan, but did not go over seas—through no fault of his own, since he was held for observation. At the close of the war he was not well, but secured a good position which he held about six months. He then broke down with tuberculosis, and he has been fighting the disease ever since. Now, at the age of forty-two years, he has been told that the disease is arrested and his compensation, which was for total disability, has been cut down to $50 a month. The premium on his insurance has been raised to $17.71 a month. This is deducted from the $50, leaving a small balance for himself and his wife to live on. Both have looked all summer for employment without success. When millions of able-bodied men are walking the streets looking for work, that is to be expected, for my son has only a part of one lung left and has been told by physicians not to let his insurance lapse as no other company will accept him. There are men (unless recently dismissed) in the Veterans' Administration, able to work, who are paid compensation and draw $1,500 a year for their services. For instance, a man in Buffalo left the army with a light case of tuberculosis which was quickly cured. He found employment and has been working ever since. Notwithstanding this fact he receives a check from the government for $150 each month. Why this discrimination?

Alice Maxson Willits

Williamsburg, Mass., December 5

The Theater Union

To the Editors of The Nation:

The Theater Union has been organized for the professional production of full-length plays which are written from the point of view of the interests of the working class. We will consider scripts dealing with all phases of contemporary America, its social conflicts, the revolutionary intellectuals, and so on. We are prepared to give acceptable scripts a competent production. Inquiries should be addressed to 104 Fifth Avenue, New York.

New York, January 15 The Theater Union

For India's Freedom

To the Editors of The Nation:

The Indian independence movement is one which challenges the interest and sympathy of all Americans. This fight for liberty is being sustained by millions of oppressed people through unprecedented methods of non-violence which mark an epoch in history; and the spectacle of India's great leader, Mahatma Gandhi, held in prison without indictment or trial, has caught the sympathy of all defenders of justice.

Americans have always been quick to lend support to oppressed peoples. The American League for India's Freedom has been organized "to express American support of Indian independence through non-violence." Its chief source of strength is its association with the English Friends of India, an organization of British citizens headed by Laurence Housman. Our league, like the companion group in England, maintains an office for correspondence with India, publishes a monthly bulletin of news not accessible to the daily press, and holds public meetings and study groups.

The American League for India's Freedom invites all friends of India to join its ranks. Our office is at 383 Bible House, New York City; our secretary is Miss Eleanor Metzel; our fee, which includes subscription to the Bulletin, is $1 a year and up. Our membership needs immediate extension if we are not to fail Gandhi and the Indian National Congress in the support we have pledged.

John Haynes Holmes, Chairman

New York, January 15

Erratum

To the Editors of The Nation:

An error found its way into my poem, "Brought as a Sheaf," in your issue of January 25. The third line from the end should have read, "as hosts who shall answer most our sighs," and not "most *of* our sighs."

New York, January 26 Raymond Larsson

Open Forum

To the Editors of The Nation:

Nation readers on the north shore of Long Island will be glad to know of the open forum inaugurated by the North Hempstead branch of the League for Independent Political Action. The forum will consist of a series of six lectures to be given in the Manhasset High School.

Two lectures have already been given. The other four will be as follows: February 7, "Is Technocracy a Way Out?" by Professor Harold F. Clark; February 14, "Tariffs and War Debts," by Oswald Garrison Villard; February 20, "How to Make Your Vote Count," by Walter J. Millard; February 28, "Who Should Own Our Public Utilities?" by Howard Y. Williams. Lectures begin at 8:30.

Mrs. Harrison Thomas

Port Washington, N. Y., January 20

Contributors to This Issue

Archibald MacLeish is the author of "New Found Land" and "Conquistador."

Lee Simonson, scene designer and author of "The Stage Is Set," is a director of the Theater Guild.

Maxwell S. Stewart, author of "The Inter-Allied Debt: An Analysis," is an economist on the staff of the Foreign Policy Association.

Wayne Gard lives in Des Moines, Iowa; he teaches at Drake University and writes for various periodicals.

Genevieve Taggard is the author of "The Life and Mind of Emily Dickinson" and of many volumes of verse.

S. K. Ratcliffe, British publicist and lecturer, is a regular contributor to the London *Spectator*.

Wilfrid Harris Crook, professor of economics at Simmons College, is the author of "The General Strike: A Study of Labor's Tragic Weapon in Theory and Practice."

Albert Guerard is professor of general and comparative literature at Leland Stanford University.

Eda Lou Walton, associate professor of English at Washington Square College, New York University, is the author of "Dawn Boy: Blackfoot and Navajo Songs" and "Jane Matthew and Other Poems."

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Books, Films, Drama

To the Powers of Darkness

By GENEVIEVE TAGGARD

My love for whose ruin we have wept
Tears no one weeps for the dead
Hears no more storms as simple as ours are.
He hears rain never. Nature is not his.
The great sane day of light and genial power
Ceases with him and is the Arctic black.
We weep that none may cheer him any more.
No not even the great sun.

Common Sense About Physics

Where Is Science Going? By Max Planck. Prologue by Albert Einstein. Translation and Biographical Note by James Murphy. W. W. Norton and Company. $2.75.

DURING the last few years the layman has found himself placed in a rather uncomfortable position. On the one hand he is told that the science of physics is arriving at certain revolutionary conclusions of the utmost importance to him as a human being, but on the other hand he is assured that he can never understand the grounds for these conclusions. So far as he will ever be able to see, the universe is a rigidly determined mechanism operating in accordance with the laws of cause and effect. All the phenomena which he will ever be able to observe obey the laws of Newtonian mechanics and justify him in concluding that he understands their operation. But there are other subtle phenomena which only the specialist can either witness or interpret and which necessitate a radically different view of the universe as a whole. Hence the unfortunate layman must disregard all the evidence which he can understand and accept upon the word of the specialist the statement that things are very different from what they seem—that even inanimate matter does not obey established law, that a kind of "free-will" exists among the atoms, and that though God may seem to have left the macrocosm pretty much to itself He is probably still practicing miraculous intervention in the inter-atomic world.

Certain respectable scientists, like Sir James Jeans, have written popular books whose aim seems to have been to bewilder the everyday reader with paradoxes whose explanation is withheld at the last moment on the ground that he could not understand it anyway. It is not, however, from such scientists that the rationally inclined layman has suffered most, but from the new-found arrogance of various unscientific obscurantists and mystagogues who have seized upon these new developments for the purpose of discounting all rationality and of imposing whatever theological vagaries may please them. To any rational objections they reply that all that is a mere remnant of nineteenth-century prejudice and that the "new physics" has done away with everything. The quantum theory and Heisenberg's principle of indeterminacy are reverently invoked as having made practically anything possible, and they serve as knock-down arguments for the use of persons who have only the very vaguest idea of what either of them means. For the first time since the dethronement of theology as the queen of the sciences, arguments between educated men concerning religion, free-will, the reign of law, and the possible existence of purpose in the universe come down to nothing more than the citation of authorities, and the most widely known popularizers have been on the side of an extremely loose variety of mysticism.

Under the circumstances the present straightforward and perspicuous little book is more than welcome. The theory of relativity and the quantum theory form the basis for most of the current paradoxes, and yet Einstein and Max Planck, respectively the originators of the two theories, here repudiate unconditionally the most important metaphysical deductions which have been made from them. On the subject of free-will Einstein is old-fashioned enough to remain content with the common-sense rationalism of Schopenhauer's remark, "Man can do what he wills but he cannot will what he will will." And on the perhaps more immediately important question of the universal validity of the law of causation, the two are agreed. Jeans has insisted that "Planck's constant" "destroys the case for absolutely strict causation," but Planck and Einstein agree, in the words of the latter, "that nonsense is not merely nonsense. It is objectionable nonsense." Einstein further insists that physics has no grounds whatever for accepting what are urged as the metaphysical implications of Heisenberg's principle; and to the suggestion that Professor Joad mentions him as corroborating the theories of Jeans and Eddington he replies simply: "No physicist believes that. Otherwise he would not be a physicist. Neither do the physicists you have mentioned."

As the layman now usually knows, the phenomenon most usually cited by those who dispute the law of causality is that which is manifest when a transfer of heat takes place from a body at a high temperature to one at a lower temperature. Physicists have discovered, or seem to have discovered, that in the case of gases an individual molecule may, so to speak, move against the general current, and on the basis of this discovery certain of them have argued that the movement of every molecule is not determined by law, though we can, of course, predict statistically how the majority of them are going to behave. To this argument the thoughtful layman must himself have replied that the indeterminable is not the same as the indeterminate and that, perhaps, the aberrant particle may be obeying forces which are not yet detectable or measurable. He may have added that this latter explanation seems the more probable in view of the fact that causality is seen to operate in the case of every phenomenon which comes within the range of ready or complete observation, and that it is a curious sort of logic which will upset the conclusions drawn from very well-known phenomena because of others drawn from very imperfectly known ones. If he has raised these objections for himself he will be pleased to see that they are exactly the ones raised by Max Planck.

We do not know that loaded dice will always fall as the dishonest gambler intends. We know only statistically that they will usually fall a certain way. But that does not prove that loaded dice have free-will. It proves only that the calculation of the movement of the dice under the impulse given them by a hand involves factors which we have no way of measuring. And it is in precisely the same way that Planck explains the so-called "indeterminacy" of molecules:

> In point of fact, statistical laws are dependent upon the assumption of the strict law of causality functioning in each particular case. And the non-fulfilment of the statistical rule in particular cases is not therefore due to the fact that the law of causality is not fulfilled, but rather to the fact that our observations are not sufficiently delicate or accurate to put the law of causality to a direct test in each case. If it were possible for us to follow the movement of each individual molecule in this very intricate labyrinth of processes, then we should find in each case an exact fulfilment of dynamic laws. . . . Here, as everywhere else, we must differentiate between the validity of the causal principle and the practicability of its application.

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Planck's book is written for, but not in any condescending way down to, the layman, and one hopes that it will get as wide a reading as have some on the other side. The harassed rationalist who does not happen to be also a technically trained physicist has now two very good authorities to cite. What is even more important, he has two great scientists who recognize the validity of logical criticisms which he is quite capable of understanding and even making for himself.

JOSEPH WOOD KRUTCH

Chamberlain the Radical

The Life of Joseph Chamberlain, 1836-1885. By J. L. Garvin. The Macmillan Company. $5.

THERE is no man in the present public life of England whose career equals that of Joseph Chamberlain in offering temptation to writers or speakers who like discussing the "ifs" of history. If Gladstone had given up the Liberal leadership when he made a feint of doing so after his defeat by Disraeli in 1874; or if he had gone, as the Queen and everyone else expected him to do, within two or three years of making his second government in 1880, the first place must have fallen to Chamberlain, already head of the radical Liberals in the country. If Gladstone, again, on admitting Chamberlain to his Cabinet, had measured the man more justly and had recognized him as the portent he was; if, in 1885, he had made the working out of an Irish settlement a cooperative task among his colleagues instead of treating it as a lonely adventure for himself, the secession of Chamberlain and his adherents might have been prevented and the course of party history and legislation have been correspondingly changed. And finally, if Arthur Balfour, after the Boer War, had been somewhat less adroit—. But what is the use of stating any such ifs? Things and actions are what they are, and the consequences of them will be what they will be.

And yet the astonishing facts stand. Joseph Chamberlain, half a century ago, was the voice of a new radicalism, the leader of a potential party which looked as if it would make an end, within a few years, of Whiggism and Gladstonian liberalism alike. He was remarkably able and positive. He had perfected a platform style equally far from the contrasted styles of Gladstone and of John Bright, and he was fast gaining power over the industrial workers. He was the first English politician to envisage the urgent needs of the great city, and he had to his credit a fine pioneer achievement of civic reconstruction, in Birmingham. He was a relentless champion of democracy against the landlords, the established church, and the whole structure of privilege; and as a provincial he seemed to embody a social force of the industrial midlands and north destined to overthrow the dominion of London society. In 1880 nothing could have seemed more fantastic than that Gladstone, already past the age of seventy, would remain in control of the Liberal host for fourteen years longer, or that midway in this period the radical leader would transfer himself to the other side and ally himself with the party which hitherto had looked upon him as diabolic. That, however, is what happened. Chamberlain employed his great parliamentary gifts in such a manner as to become the main influence toward the revival of Tory ascendancy and the shaping of a new imperialism—thus helping, among other things, to destroy the chances of a reasonable settlement with Ireland and to make inevitable the surrender of thirty-six years later. It is a story without a parallel.

This first volume of a spaciously planned record carries Chamberlain to his fiftieth year. With a complete command of the material, a fine sweep of hand, and an energy of narrative that never flags, Mr. Garvin expounds the dissenter and iconoclast. To those who know the biographer only as editor of the *Observer,* ringing Sunday changes on the themes of democratic conservatism, it may seem strange that he should be able not only to present but to glorify the earlier Chamberlain. As a matter of fact, Mr. Garvin is in his element, one very definite reason being that he is by nature and habit an impassioned anti-Gladstonian. A portrait of the midland radical is and must be a downright anti-Gladstonian document, as we shall see even more plainly when the second volume is reached. The Chamberlains were Unitarians; Gladstone was a high Anglican. Chamberlain knew the England of the large industrial centers, and was close to their problems of slums and land values a generation before the rise of the Labor Party. Gladstone, for all his splendor of spirit, had not, when his great chance came in 1880, come even within sight of the social problem. And Mr. Garvin has the advantage of writing the life of Chamberlain the radical at a time when party politics have been submerged and the social problem has for the great majority of his contemporaries become all in all. His is a challenging and fascinating subject, and he has identified himself so entirely with it that from beginning to end of these 600 pages there is no hint of disharmony between the radical Chamberlain and the most vital and distinguished of Conservative journalists expressing himself in an altered world. The volume is a grand orchestration. It makes an important epoch of English national life glow and march. And, let me add, here are an epoch and a nation with both of which the American reader should find himself in almost full accord.

S. K. RATCLIFFE

A Poet Disinterred

The Complete Poems of John Skelton. Edited by Philip Henderson. E. P. Dutton and Company. $3.50.

IN one of our modern fantasies there is an amusing scene showing literary men of the future, mining libraries for valuable books as today we dig for ores. As literature accumulates and scholarship elaborates methods of preservation, this notion would seem to be more a forecast than a fantasy. The process may be said to be in action already, for disinterring buried masterpieces has become one of the cherished ambitions of criticism, and may in time become one of its chief functions.

Philip Henderson, in editing this edition of Skelton, judiciously modernizing the spelling and defining obscure terms, deserves credit enough for the venture itself, which restores to us a genuine master; but he has added to this credit by writing an introduction brilliant on all its facets—vivid in its portraiture of Skelton and in its description of his era, and shrewd in its estimation of his poetry. I can do little more by way of a review than confirm his judgment and summarize his principal statements.

Skelton wrote in one of the flattest periods of English literature—the latter half of the fifteenth century. Chaucer had grown remote, a vague memory. The writers who followed him had staled his measures into flavorless conventions. Skelton startled his generation with a poetry extraordinary for the vigor and variety of its rhythm and for the vitality of its matter. Skeleton had sharp senses and a huge appetite. Utterly unsqueamish, he was enabled to turn the vulgar, the macabre, and the grotesque into poetry. He wrote with exultant and careless gusto. He antagonized his contemporaries and apparently enjoyed the quarrels. But he was not present to sustain the struggle in later generations. Condemnation grew and permitted his survival only as a figure to whom the learned prurient could look for furtive entertainment. A master of the

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meticulous like Pope dismissed him with the epithet "beastly." Warton included Skelton in his survey of English poetry, but only for the sake of comprehensiveness, and rated his drab contemporaries above him because they rhymed more scrupulously and provided morals with their verses. With the romantic revival some appreciation of Skelton began to appear. Coleridge and Wordsworth called attention to him. But our own period, defiant of formulas and decorum, is certain to give him the warmest hospitality.

When examined, Skelton's meters, on the surface so undisciplined, are seen to be of extraordinary richness and versatility. What appears to be abandon we soon discover to be the effect of great dexterity and variety. "Elinor Rumming," with its syncopated effects, has a verse form that is strikingly original and wonderfully effective. "Philip Sparrow" dashes on in swift short measures, out of which, however, nuances and delicate conceits are distilled; everywhere in this poetry are diversity and animation. The predominant tone of it is satirical and the satire is frequently rough and bludgeoning; yet a lyric master is everywhere in evidence.

The restoration of Skelton to the ranks of accessible poets is an event to be thankful for. ISIDOR SCHNEIDER

Barter or Dole?

The Abolition of Unemployment. By Frank D. Graham. Princeton University Press. $2.

Unemployment. By Sir William Beveridge. Longmans, Green and Company. $5.

"UNEMPLOYMENT has a business, not an economic, basis. It issues solely from dislocated exchange relationships and could not occur in a pioneer society, where every producer is laborer, capitalist, landlord, and enterpriser at one and the same time." Professor Graham, of Princeton and Geneva, gives concise expression to an idea which American farmers have been putting into practice for some years, and many of the unemployed for some months. He believes that if our unemployed were set down in a fertile but undeveloped country they would instantly start to work rather than starve. Such work, he holds, could be organized at once in this country on a self-sustaining basis, with an initial expense that would be trifling compared with our present yearly relief bill.

National prosperity and high real wages depend upon production, not upon unemployment-relief doles or unemployment insurance, both palliatives at best. Further curtailment of production will ruin what business is still functioning, and the rising cost of relief will threaten destruction of the still existing incomes, without solving the unemployment problem. Idle resources, idle plants, and idle men could all be brought together under an Emergency Employment Corporation, a non-profit-making concern. Under such a corporation unemployed workers of all kinds and trades could be set to work to produce goods for their fellow-"jobless." Payment for such work would be in scrip, exchangeable for the goods that these jobless turn out. Such scrip could not be hoarded, since it would lose some of its value each successive month. Goods produced would therefore be rapidly purchased and consumed.

The amount of payment for work would depend upon the amount of goods produced by the corporation, week by week. The valuation basis for labor and for goods produced would be the present market value in terms of the dollar. Once started, the organization would be virtually self-supporting, would provide a much better standard of living for the "jobless" than the present meager relief doles, and would lift from the backs of the struggling business men and workers the present huge burden of relief taxation.

Such an Emergency Corporation would not compete in the wage or commodity markets with existing business and labor, for the unemployed would be working and being paid in a self-contained economy. At the same time Professor Graham would have the corporation rent at low rates many existing plant and distribution facilities, thus enabling business men to meet some of their heavy overhead costs in this depression. This point, perhaps, will be the target of the major part of the criticism called forth by his scheme.

Farmers would gain by the exchange of their unsalable surplus for goods produced by the workers in the Emergency Corporation, and those workers in turn could obtain larger and better supplies of foodstuffs and raw materials from the farmers than would be possible if they had nothing to offer in exchange but their miserable relief doles. The rapid consumption of the farmers' surplus would favorably affect the regular market for agricultural produce. Moreover, with the unemployed the nation over assured of steady work in the Emergency Corporation, much hoarded money put aside by those still employed for money wages would quickly find its way into the normal channels of business and help lift the depression. This is no Utopia. Professor Graham meets many probable objections with careful arguments and data. Workers and farmers in many of the States are already struggling manfully to start such a 'barter exchange." The immediate and urgent need is for organization of this movement on a national scale in order to gain the full benefit of the specialized industries of different regions. No heavy bond issue, no inflation of the currency, is needed—just a little courage and plain horse sense. Our pioneer grandfathers would have known how to proceed. One can scarcely believe that their descendants have become utterly incapable.

Professor Graham indicates that his scheme is a temporary emergency plan which reviving business would gradually reduce to a mere skeleton, to be retained, perhaps, for future periods of unemployment. Your reviewer takes a more gloomy view of the capacity of even revived business to absorb anything like the mass of those now unemployed. For that reason he welcomes the more warmly this plan for a sane alternative to present conditions, where vast natural surpluses rot and idle men decay.

"Unemployment" is a reprint of Sir William Beveridge's classic of 1909, with seven valuable chapters, added in 1930, bringing up to date the vicissitudes of British unemployment insurance. Sir William describes the deplorable change "from insurance by contract to relief by status" that has resulted from the successive pieces of legislation. The major fault with the British and other unemployment-insurance schemes does not lie in the temptation to "loaf on the dole," a glib allegation thoroughly disproved. The real peril lies in the demoralization of "governments, employers, and trade unions," in that they "take less thought for the prevention of unemployment." On this point Beveridge and Graham are in absolute agreement.

WILFRID HARRIS CROOK

Napoleon

Napoleon. By Jacques Bainville. Little, Brown and Company. Translated from the French by Hamish Miles. $3.75.

The French Revolution and Napoleon. By Leo Gershoy. F. S. Crofts and Company. $5.

BAINVILLE is a royalist and a nationalist. In his "History of France" he wore blinkers and colored glasses. In this book he is miraculously free. Most historians start with haughty claims to impartiality, Bainville makes no such promise and is better than his word. His great superiority is that he does not attempt to define Napoleon. Neither at the beginning of his work nor in his conclusion do we find a glitter-

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ing formula, like Taine's *condottiere*. No man is a theorem; he is a bewildering complex of aspirations, most of them frustrated. The alleged "will" of a hero is a resultant which baffles analysis. And that will, such as it may be, is only one element in the man's career, far less potent than two other factors, necessity and chance.

Necessity (in Napoleon's own terms "the force of things") appears in Bainville's book under the guise of England. Europe could never accept the sudden and tremendous extension won by France in 1795; England, the only country that could not be coerced into acquiescence, embodied that refusal to the end. Napoleon was committed to the defense of impossible conquests for which he was not responsible. His military genius, the united resources and the enthusiasm of the French, the incompetence and divisions of the European sovereigns deferred the inevitable solution for nearly twenty years. But sooner or later the treaties of Basel were to be torn up by some Waterloo.

The thesis, which is not new, is plausible but not fully convincing. Bainville exaggerates the determination of the British and the importance of Antwerp, "that pistol aimed at England's heart." Prussia and Russia kept for well over a century conquests more extensive and more unnatural than those of the French Revolution. The peace of Amiens was popular among the masses across the Channel. It could have been preserved but for the insatiable and unscrupulous ambition of Napoleon. But there, again, Napoleon was merely following an example. It was the helpless and megalomaniac Directoire that sought adventure, pelf, and trouble beyond the Alps and beyond the Rhine. The circle of "protected" republics—Batavian, Cisalpine, Ligurian, Roman, Helvetian, Parthenopean—was an adumbration of that splendid phantasmagoria, the Grand Empire of 1810. Resolutely on the defensive within her so-called "natural" frontiers, France might have held them indefinitely.

Bainville's narrative never strives for eloquence, pathos, or picturesqueness. Yet it is constantly fascinating. A keen, energetic mind, earnestly and fearlessly seeking a path, affords a finer spectacle than all the pomp of empire. But the obvious dramatic power for which Bainville does not care clings unsought to his pages. His sober allusions evoke the glittering pageantry of triumph and the somber magnificence of epic downfall. And although he never "explains" Napoleon, we close the book with the feeling that we have been brought closer than ever before to the primitive, histrionic, and tormented soul of the Conqueror.

Professor Gershoy's book seems excellent of its kind. But for its kind—the magnified college textbook—I personally have very little liking. This volume is an able, up-to-date summary of research in an enormous field. But compilation is not history. First-hand information, like Gottschalk's "Marat" or Bruun's masterly little "Saint-Just," is history; and every honest monograph is at least history in the making. Interpretation, never losing sight of the facts, like Bainville's "Napoleon" or Carl Becker's "Heavenly City," is nearer the finished product. But an enormous collection of facts at second hand, without personal philosophy and without personal style, is of doubtful value except for sophomore cramming.

The nemesis of such a book, heaping together the spoils of a hundred research workers, is that it can never be wholly consistent in thought or even in the presentation of details. Professor Gershoy tells us in the same paragraph that Napoleon was "a profound statesman" and that "from the first he did not know whither he was going." A profound statesman would have read much earlier the plain sign: "This way madness lies." Fouché, Talleyrand, and even Madame Letizia had read it without effort. The brief summing up of the Peninsular War is wholly misleading: "Against that dogged commander [Wellington], Napoleon was to send his best marshals and 300,000 of his grizzled veterans, but nothing availed him. . . ." Professor Gershoy forgets that in 1812 Wellington, who had reached Madrid, was sharply defeated, and had to retreat post-haste all the way to Portugal, "the officers having lost all command over their men." If in 1813 he was able to pursue the retiring French, it was only because "twelve hundred miles away the Grand Army was dead."

The bibliography is extensive, valuable, but not always critical. General Ballard's naive primer had best be consigned to oblivion. Kircheisen's is called "the best one-volume study since Fournier." Professor Gershoy must have been impressed by the appalling bulk of Kircheisen's other contributions to Napoleonic scholarship rather than by a careful evaluation of this particular opus; the quantitative test is not a reliable one. But we must repeat that the faults of Professor Gershoy's large and handsome volume belong to the type—a type for which there exists a large demand, and which our strictures are not likely to injure. For the painstaking and lucid work of Professor Gershoy himself we have nothing but sincere respect.

ALBERT GUERARD

The Osage Indians

Wah'kon-tah. By John Joseph Mathews. University of Oklahoma Press. $2.50.

THE author of this book is a member of the Osage tribe of Indians, a graduate of the University of Oklahoma with a degree in natural science from Oxford. He has spent most of his life on the Osage reservation and he knows his own people. His story begins in 1878 when the late Major Laban J. Miles came as agent to the Osages, and it is based on careful notes left by Major Miles. The tale ends with the coming of the white men, when oil was discovered on the Osage reservation and the Indians became wealthy. It has to do chiefly with that period in the history of the tribe when the Indians, although they were under the United States government, still held to their simple customs and to their faith in Wah'kon-tah, or, in translation, to "that which the children of the Earth do not comprehend as they travel the roads of the Earth and which becomes clear to them only when they have passed on to the Great Mysteries."

Mr. Mathews's book is valuable as anthropological material in that it covers a period during which Indian customs and beliefs and rituals were slowly undergoing an inevitable change under the growing influence of the white man's civilization. It is a very interesting account of the workings of the Indian mind, long disciplined and learned in ancient lore, when brought by necessity into contact with a whole new set of ideas belonging to another people. Major Miles, intelligent and very sympathetic, is the mediator between the Indians and the white cowboys, traders, and exploiters. His is the central figure in the drama; to him come all the perplexed leaders of the Indian tribes. He must explain to these chiefs laws which they cannot understand, a system of ethics not their own, ideas in medicine utterly foreign to their curative practices. The story of this period in the development of the Osage nation ends with the death of Major Miles.

Mr. Mathews writes very well indeed. He has an extremely accurate ear for Indian speech and is able to translate the poetry of that speech into English. He understands perfectly the Osages' poetic feeling about their country, their customs, their religious beliefs. Through an incident, a bit of drama, a conversation, a descriptive sketch of the country, he gives us a sense of the dignity and intelligence of this tribe. Because he is himself an Osage, he does not, as so many white writers incline to do, romanticize or sentimentalize his material. He allows the facts to speak for themselves, but he is able so

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to interpret the facts that we are left with a conviction: these Osage Indians were a people so completely at one with their environment, so beautifully able to express the meaning of the setting in which they dwelt, that the coming of the whites and the consequent breaking down of Indian culture must seem a tragedy.

"Wah'kon-tah" is one of the best of several studies of the Indian mind. We have at last come to realize that to have any record of the Indian mind before it perishes entirely, we must collect quickly the stories of such old Indians as remember the past. We value highly, therefore, this sympathetic, intelligent, artistic interpretation of the Osage.

EDA LOU WALTON

Shorter Notices

The Mirror of Fools. By Alfred Neumann. Translated from the German by Trevor and Phyllis Blewitt. Alfred A. Knopf. $2.50.

Readers looking for entertainment will find it in "The Mirror of Fools," wherein they need not fear to see their own reflections. The book has no satirical intent; the characters are caricatures put together for no moral purpose—only the clown's purpose of making us laugh. Here is burlesque from belt to buttock, all grinningly unrefined. It is the story of an enormously fat and sensual princeling of the Holy Roman Empire and his cadaverous and ascetic chamberlain who knock about Germany in the sixteenth century, floundering through a cleverly invented mess of misadventures. However, in spite of Neumann's ingenuity and skilful workmanship the book cannot be accorded a very high rating. It succeeds in being amusing, but it has no integrity of its own. It passes lightly out of the mind, unlike its great sources, Don Quixote, Tyl Eulenspiegel, and Pantagruel, whose materials it so deftly reworks.

The Last Adam. By James Gould Cozzens. Harcourt, Brace and Company. $2.50.

Since Main Street has become a term of opprobrium, a synonym for small-town bigotry and hypocrisy, Mr. Cozzens's demonstration that the simple and heroic life may still be lived in a quiet New England village has at least the charm of rediscovery and reaffirmation. But it is precisely this emphasis on reaffirmation that constitutes a serious limitation to his work. In tracing the destinies of the residents of New Winton, chief among whom is Dr. Bull, a heroic and Rabelaisian practitioner of the old school, Mr. Cozzens gives us the feeling that he is neatly solving a theorem, with the Q. E. D. that there is after all a good deal of human nature in mankind—even when the species happens to inhabit a small town. But this conclusion is not enough. Dr. Bull is drawn only in outline, with bold strokes, and has a rather official epic quality. What the story chiefly lacks is the element of surprise—not the unexpected turn of plot, but the turn of character, the pleasurable surprise of detail and individualization.

The Orient in American Transcendentalism: A Study of Emerson, Thoreau, and Alcott. By Arthur Christy. Columbia University Press. $4.

Mr. Christy does in greater detail and for a broader field what Frederic Ives Carpenter undertook in "Emerson and Asia" (1930). He sets out "to tell why Concord men read the Orientals and to what end; and most important of all, the sources from which they took Oriental ideas and ornamentation for some of the classic pages of American literature." The monograph puts the Concord group in a new relation to world literature, underlining a fundamental generalization to which all students have agreed—that the Transcendentalists were eclectics par excellence. Mr. Carpenter laid down the proposition that Emerson approached the East through Neo-Platonism and Mr. Christy accepts the point without laboring it. He goes on to show, in the light of a very intensive study and from the vantage-point of an exhaustive knowledge of Oriental thought and Oriental studies, just how and what the three men borrowed from the literatures of India, China, and Persia, leaving the Zoroastrian question to one side. Borrowed is the proper term for what they did, the definition of Emerson's method applying to them all: "He was fascinated with them and used them abundantly, sometimes with a purpose quite contradictory to that in the Oriental mind. But however they were used they reflected his own moods, impulses, and spiritual experience." Emerson was of course most hospitable to the literature of India, as were Alcott and Thoreau. Mr. Christy thinks the influence of Confucius was greater than that allowed by Mr. Carpenter, but agrees that the Persian influence was expressed mainly in poetic method and diction. Thoreau is discussed chiefly as a Western exponent of asceticism, while Alcott is viewed as a popular propagandist for Oriental doctrines. A major contribution is the definition of the Oriental strain in Emerson's optimism. Altogether the book is a valuable contribution to our knowledge of the origins of a major American literary movement.

Zola. By Henri Barbusse. Translated from the French by M. B. and F. C. Green. E. P. Dutton and Company. $3.

M. Barbusse makes no new revelations concerning Zola's life, the last private details of which were made public some years ago by his heirs and indicated few enough and reasonable enough vices. It is regrettable, moreover, that he "novelizes" the life in a form which has become curiously popular in France, thanks to the transient successes of Maurois. We are given a succession of impressionistic scenes and glimpses of the great man and his milieu, from the time when he began his Rougon-Macquart series of novels to the day of the Dreyfus case. Sometimes these impressions are based on documents, new and old; sometimes on simple conjectures of the biographer; but nearly always they have the effect of making the subject remote and the historian disagreeably immediate. What M. Barbusse does exceedingly well, however, in the whole second half of his book, is to drop the "novelizing" and interpret the interior drama of Zola in terms of our own time. During what can only be called a revolutionary crisis Zola, the worthy bourgeois, emerged from his study and threw himself into the political struggle on the side of humanity and decency. With "J'accuse!" as M. Barbusse trenchantly phrases it, the "man of letters" had become the "man." On the subject of Zola's courageous example and his conversion to socialism M. Barbusse, who is a Communist, speaks with the utmost conviction and forthrightness. What of our own writers, he asks, in a time of social debacle, of the foreseen agony of an international empire? Will they remain silent, which is to say complaisant, or will they take their stand?

The Congressional Follies. New York: The Abbot Press. $1.50.

For years H. L. Mencken has been boosting the *Congressional Record* as the most hilarious periodical in the country. Now some anonymous hand has made a compilation from its pages which is published under the very appropriate title "The Congressional Follies." Unfortunately, however, the extracts are only occasionally funny. The best one is a list of bulletins issued by the Department of Agriculture, which include "Principles of Window Curtaining," "Children's Rompers," "How to Dress for a Sun Bath," "Where Sheets Wear Out," and

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"Vitamins in Relation to Salad Dressing." For some incomprehensible reason only the *Record* of the first session of the Seventy-second Congress has been drawn upon. There is thus still room for a truly choice collection based upon a long succession of Congresses.

The Growth of Literature. Volume I: *The Ancient Literatures of Europe.* By H. Munro Chadwick and N. Kershaw Chadwick. The Macmillan Company. $6.50.

This is the first volume of a work which, according to the authors' plans, will require three volumes for completion. It is a comparative study of five literatures—Greek, Anglo-Saxon, Irish, Welsh, and Norse—in the period before they were set down in writing and subjected to influences that disintegrated their native qualities. The purpose of the authors is to follow the growth of literature and the elaboration of genres, and to trace the operation of general principles in this growth. The authors reserve their conclusions for the final volume, but the tone of the present work forecasts them. It seems clear that they will demonstrate that, given similar conditions, peoples remote from each other will develop similar literatures. In the course of their work the authors turn up some curious and fascinating data, but the book as a whole, in obedience to the scruples of scholarship, is too inclusive of detail to make interesting reading.

Films

Movie Cant and Criticism

MOVIE criticism, although it is too new to have set up any really solid standards or even to have found for itself an adequate vocabulary, has already managed to establish in a certain section of the public mind a body of a priori judgments which can only be described as cant. I suppose what we usually mean by cant nowadays is the adoption of some opinion or point of view whose implications of superiority depend largely on its being at variance with the popular (or should we say vulgar?) point of view. Now the essence of current movie cant is fortunately summed up in a single definitive and invariable dictum: that nothing worth while ever has or will or can come out of Hollywood. If one shares this conviction, the whole problem of discrimination in the films is of course very much simplified. It is only necessary to make sure that the picture seen was made in Germany or Russia or Czecho-Slovakia to be relieved of the always difficult task of critical analysis and comparison. An unqualified admiration for foreign films, therefore, not only becomes a mark of good taste but also represents, in an age of hard thinking, a considerable economy of mental energy.

The truth is, of course, that it is much too early to make any generalizations about the films on a merely national basis of comparison. If a fair-minded jury were to draw up a list of the ten best films produced to date, it is fairly certain that at least four countries of the globe would be represented and each of them to about the same extent. And one of these countries would certainly be our own. The movie, in so far as it is a characteristic phenomenon of the age, is an international medium; and the perfect movie, when it appears, is as likely as not to be a synthesis of elements now being separately developed all over the world. We need only point, for example, to the obvious fact that such a director as René Clair owes just about as much to Hollywood as Hollywood owes to René Clair. And in the more recent German films one sees an increasingly fruitful assimilation of American and other foreign influences.

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NORTH GERMAN LLOYD

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1933
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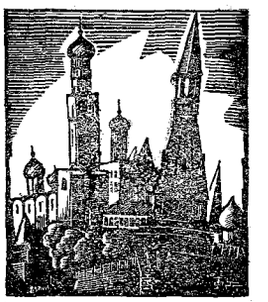
and New Beginnings
in Soviet Russia



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Certainly these remarks have no very particular application to the unpretentious French film at the Little Carnegie. "Sous la Lune du Maroc" is, first of all, a rather charming travelogue of Fez and other spots in North Africa. It is also a rambling, poorly accented melodrama about five Europeans suffering under a trumped-up sorcerer's curse in the same region. Between the setting and the melodrama, however, there is no inevitable connection; the excellent photography is not integrated with the narrative. Many of the effects—such as the checkerboard shadows beneath the lattice-roofed streets—we have already seen in Von Sternberg's "Morocco." The important difference is that while in the one these have only a photographic value, in the other they had a dramatic value as well.

"Woman's World," at the Acme on Fourteenth Street, is somewhat below the level of recent films from the Soviet Republic. The difficulty here again is not that the picture is pure melodrama or melodrama based on propagandist values which one may or may not accept, but that it is, for an American audience, unsuccessful melodrama. For such an audience melodrama is made effective only by a speeding-up of its psychology of response—a condition that apparently does not apply to a Russian audience. The still-photography throughout has of course a certain independent beauty of its own.

The Film Forum opened triumphantly with an uncensored newsreel of the march of the unemployed on Washington last summer and an uncut version of Fritz Lang's "M." "Hunger" was interesting as a social document but not as interesting as it should have been as a photographic treatment of the event. The Forum should be congratulated on its choice of "M" for its initial offering.

WILLIAM TROY

Drama

The Prosecution Rests

ELMER RICE'S sociological drama "We, the People" is an indictment pure and simple. The twenty scenes which pass rapidly across the stage of the Empire Theater summarize vividly the case against contemporary society and conclude with a series of speeches directed straight at the audience. No previous effort of the same sort has been anything like so ambitious, and none has been, within its limitations, so effective. The most convinced defender of the status quo could hardly fail to feel the force of the indictment, and several times the audience broke out into mingled applause and hisses. Here are clarity, logic, and an intense sincerity, plus a very unusual gift for dramatic writing.

And yet, if the truth must be told, a certain sense of disappointment is mingled with the admiration one feels. It was to be hoped that Mr. Rice would do more than state a strong case strongly; it was to be hoped that he would be technically inventive, that he would advance the art of the sociological drama by making it more satisfactory as drama. But that is exactly what he has failed to do. Perhaps it would be unfair to say that "We, the People" is merely "bigger and better" in the conventional American sense. But it would be, at least, to state a part of the truth. The play stands out because it is ambitious, elaborate, and complete. It is not essentially new, original, or inventive. Like all the other plays of its kind it is interesting almost wholly because of its subject matter. No one could possibly call it a good play after it had ceased to be relevant to existing conditions, and it will be admired precisely to the extent that the individual spectator happens to be on the author's side.

Great propaganda must manage in some way to hold even

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those who do not want to hear, and that "We, the People" will fail to do. If he is honest with himself, even the most delighted spectator will realize that he is thinking chiefly of what the play is going to do to his opponents rather than of what it is doing to him. The prosecution is summing up and summing up well, but it is stating nothing which has not been stated before. The dispossessed family, the riot at the factory, and the condemnation of the agitator are typical; so too, perhaps, are the attitudes of the industrial magnate and of the "liberal" college president who dismisses the troublesome professor. But they are too little more than merely typical. We expect of a drama that it shall tell us something we do not know, give us some insight we did not have, or, if it deals wholly with the familiar, that it shall arouse and then discharge our emotions in some effective way. If it does none of these things, we may still "approve" as we approve "We, the People"; but we shall remain, nevertheless, unsatisfied.

This particular sort of thing will hardly be better done than it has been done here, and that means, I think, that the contemporary drama of protest has yet to find a suitable method. It has already discarded a great many conventions, but that is merely a negative achievement. It scorns neat structure, which, for example, Mr. Rice himself knows so well how to use in plays of a different kind, and it scorns also that emotional reconciliation which, in tragedy, takes the place of the happy end of comedy. Since its avowed purpose is not to reconcile the audience to life but to exasperate it into action, it refuses to resolve its own discords and it ends upon a dissonance. Unlike the drama as it has usually been known, but like the classical oration, it ends with the question: "What are you going to do about it?" And its true last act is, I suppose, that revolt at the polls or that riot in the street which would furnish the only conclusion either logically or emotionally satisfactory. But when the revolt or the riot does not take place the spectator merely finds himself with emotions undischarged. That is not aesthetically satisfying, and for that reason it is unsuccessful as propaganda. It provides no attraction for those who need its arguments to convince them, and if it pleases at all it pleases only those who are convinced already.

"Art is a weapon." If I understand aright those who announce this dogma, they recognize and proclaim their departure from the whole tradition of the "classics." But if they do, then they have taken over far too many of the methods suitable only for a different purpose, and they too often challenge comparisons which result unfavorably. They need styles as revolutionary as their intentions, and they have not developed them. Despite the fact that it is broken into many episodes "We, the People" is enough like a conventional play to arouse the conventional anticipations. It engages our sympathy for a group of individuals and then plunges them into a series of difficulties which we follow with concern. But it does not provide the satisfaction which such a drama ordinarily provides. Not only does it take abrupt leave of these personages, but it fails to make the characters as such anything like so interesting as the characters in more conventional plays. Since they are intended to be typical they lack individuality, and they tend to sink to the level of mere puppets—to become merely *a* workman, *a* college professor, and so on. Yet the process of typification is not carried far enough to make them pure symbols. Doubtless the drama of social forces must deal with generalities, but if it is to do this effectively, then it must do it so clearly that the human beings involved will seem to us more than merely rather colorless individuals. And that is a good though simple example of what I mean by saying that if such plays are to revolutionize the drama, they are not yet revolutionary enough. They still challenge comparisons unfavorable to themselves and still suggest intentions which are not realized.

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Feb. 17—Facts and Fancies about Russia
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draws in the audience it intends to convince, and it may do that in either of two ways. It may, like the comedies of Bernard Shaw, be so diverting that the bitter is swallowed for the sake of the sweet. It may, on the other hand, be so original, so surprising, so obviously a work of genius, that the enemy comes—either because he is genuinely interested in supreme excellence of any kind or because, snob-like, he must be *au courant* with things artistic and intellectual. Unfortunately, the revolutionary drama of the moment has not found either its Shaw or its Ibsen. One does not have to go.

"Pigeons and People" (Sam H. Harris Theater) is an almost indescribable entertainment in which George M. Cohan, the author, plays the role of a mysterious park-bench philosopher whose directness and sincerity completely befuddle a rich young man determined to befriend him. It is an extraordinary *tour de force* for Mr. Cohan, who is on the stage continuously for an hour and a half before his single brief absence from it. It is also well worth seeing both for the amusement it provides and for the insight it gives into the mind of a remarkable American original. Sometimes Mr. Cohan's "philosophy" suggests the plaintive lyrics of the life-is-a-funny-proposition-after-all school. At other moments it is elevated by a patent sincerity into something almost profound. "Pigeons and People," with its sometimes childish and sometimes intriguing metaphysical ingenuities, might have been written by a self-educated Pirandello.

I must add a word of belated praise for the incredibly deft marionettes performing at the Lyric Theater under the title of "The Piccoli." Nothing deflates the human being more effectively than the malicious realism of these puppets, and the gestures of the great or dignified cannot fool us any more. It is done with strings.

JOSEPH WOOD KRUTCH

□ JOSEPH WOOD KRUTCH says □

ALICE IN WONDERLAND. Civic Repertory Theater. It will fascinate children and adults alike by the reality of its unreality and the sense of its nonsense.

ANOTHER LANGUAGE. Booth Theater. Hilarious perennial exposing almost anybody's family.

AUTUMN CROCUS. Morosco Theater. Sentimental English comedy with Dorothy Gish and a new matinee idol named Francis Lederer.

BIOGRAPHY. Guild Theater. An intelligent and sinewy comedy about what happens when a cultivated woman of the world tries to choose between a pompous opportunist and an unmanageable idealist.

DESIGN FOR LIVING. Ethel Barrymore Theater. To be reviewed next week.

DINNER AT EIGHT. Music Box Theater. Trick melodrama about what happened to the various guests invited to a dinner party. The general public likes it very much better than I do.

GOODBYE AGAIN. Masque Theater. Fine performances by Osgood Perkins and others make this farce comedy very funny.

PIGEONS AND PEOPLE. Lyceum Theater. Reviewed in this issue.

THE LATE CHRISTOPHER BEAN. Henry Miller Theater. Light comedy from the French completely rewritten by Sidney Howard and charmingly played by Pauline Lord and others. All things considered, it is much the most enjoyable comedy of the season.

WE, THE PEOPLE. Empire Theater. Reviewed in this issue.

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